

Crash of Russian airliner TUI 54M



A Tupolev TU-154M(RA85185) of Pulkovo Airlines operating as flight 612 from Russian Black sea resort of Anapa to St.petersburg with 171 on-board including the crew crashed near Donetsk, Russia on August 22, 2006 around 1530 hrs (Moscow time) The plane disappeared from radar shortly after making a distress call. A distress call was made at FL330 and again at FL100. The aircraft was reportedly on fire before it crashed. The plane crashed in a field, 30 miles North of Ukrainian city of Donetsk. and broke-up. The fuselage of the plane was entirely destroyed. An unidentified woman told Russian television that the plane was floating and circled around and then it went down, immediately there was an explosion and smoke started rising.

According to the Ukraine's emergencies ministry the crew had decided to make an emergency landing after a fire broke out. But Russian officials told the ITAR_TASS news agency that the plane had encountered severe weather conditions. Weather forecasters reported thunderstorms and lightning in the area at the time of the crash.



Burning debris and the engines

It may be recalled that just last month, an A310 while landing at Irkutsk International Airport skidded off a runway and burst into flames killing 128.

The Tupolev-154 has for more than a quarter of a century been the backbone of Russia and the Soviet Union's air transport system. It has carried half the number of all passengers flown by Aeroflot and its successors in that time, with that number peaking at 137 million per year in 1990.

About 1,000 have been built, and many remain in service in Russia. The aircraft entered service in 1972 and was "modernized" in 1986, with new engines and equipment to improve its fuel consumption and flight operations. The aircraft is likely to remain in service in Russia and former Soviet republics for another decade.