Beat: Miscellaneous

Small airliner crashes in northern Bolivia, killing 8

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USPA News - Eight people were killed, including three government officials, when a small airliner crashed Sunday while trying to land at an airport in northern Bolivia, authorities said on Monday. It occurred during severe weather, but the cause of the crash was not immediately known.

The Fairchild Swearingen Metroliner, belonging to Bolivian airline Aerocon, had left Teniente Jorge Henrich Arauz Airport in the city of Trinidad in Cercado province and was on a flight to Riberalta-Gen Buech Airport in the town of Riberalta, located in Vaca Díez province, at the point where the Madre de Dios River joins the Beni River. The aircraft, which was carrying 16 passengers and two crew members, touched down at the airport at 3:58 p.m. local time on Sunday before leaving the runway, flipping over and bursting into flames. Eyewitnesses said the plane landed during heavy rain and wind, but it was not immediately known if weather played a role in the crash. A spokesperson for the country`s Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGAC) said eight passengers were killed in the crash while 10 survivors were injured, with some of them believed to be in a critical condition. Among those injured are pilot Kevin Roca Alpire and co-pilot Cecilia Tapia Salinas. The DGAC said its staff members based in Riberalta immediately responded to the crash site to assist in the rescue of the victims, after which they began searching for the aircraft`s two black boxes. Attempts to remove the wreckage from the scene were unsuccessful as of early Monday morning due to continuing severe weather conditions. Former Beni Department Governor Ernesto Suarez said three government officials from the state`s social management department were among those killed, while others from the delegation were injured. Carmelo Lens, the department`s current governor, said on Monday that he had declared three days of mourning in the region. Bolivian President Evo Morales told state news agency ABI that he had ordered a "thorough investigation" into the cause of the accident.

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