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crashed on Wednesday 6:30am

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Prince Harry and Meghan to 'step back' as senior UK royals to avoid media gauntlet

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Iran searching black box on plane crash of 94 Iranians & 63 Canadians by 2-missiles.

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01.10.20

Israel frees Syria spy, killer as goodwill move after 1982 MIA soldier body returned

01.10.20

Israel frees Syria spy, killer as goodwill move after MIA soldier's body returned
Netanyahu confirms release of Sidqi al-Maqt and Amal Abu Saleh, calling it 'political gesture of goodwill', following the return of the late Zachary Baumel's body from Syria to

Israel; Baumel disappeared during 1982 battle against Syrian troops in Lebanon
Ynet, Reuters | Updated: 01.10.20 , 09:53

Israel on Friday released two prisoners, including one jailed for spying for Syria, in what it called a goodwill gesture for the Russian-assisted repatriation last year of the body of an IDF soldier who fell in Lebanon in 1982.

Russia, a key ally of Syria, in April 2019 handed Israel the remains and personal effects of Zachary Baumel, who was declared missing in action along with two other soldiers following the First Lebanon War tank battle with Syrian forces at Sultan Yaqoub.

Sidqi al-Maqt, 53, was jailed for 11 years in 2015 "for treason and espionage, support for terrorism and contact with a hostile organization."

Amal Abu Saleh was imprisoned the same year for seven years for killing a Syrian national who was being taken to an Israeli hospital, the Israel Prisons Service said. Both men were released "before the end of their imprisonment" in coordination with the IDF, the IPS said.

Abu Saleh was freed from Hermon Prison in the north, while Al-Maqt was released from Katziot Prison in the southern Negev Desert.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed the release, describing it as a "political gesture of goodwill, following the return of the late Zachary Baumel's body from Syria to Israel."

The Prime Minister's Office said the two men released are from Majdal Shams, a Druze village in the Golan Heights.

U.S.-born Baumel went missing during the June 1982 battle against Syrian troops at the Lebanese village of Sultan Yacoub, close to the Lebanese-Syrian border.

He was believed to have been captured by enemy forces.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russian forces based in Syria were those who found Baumel's remains.

Earlier this year, Israel released two other Syrian prisoners - a Fatah terrorist and a drug smuggler - sending them to Syria in return for Baumel's remains.

Al-Maqt was indicted at the Nazareth District Courthouse in 2015 following a lengthy investigation by police and the Shin Bet security service.

He previously served a 27-year-sentence and was arrested again five years ago on charges of espionage, after he allegedly passed photocopied materials, reports and observations on IDF activity in the Golan Heights to Syrian intelligence sources.

He was accused of espionage, abetting an enemy during wartime, supporting a terror organization, having contact with a foreign agent and other security offenses.

He was first imprisoned in 1985 on charges of terrorist activity and was released in August 2012.

Al Saleh, along with another man, was convicted on charges of murdering a wounded Syrian man while they were being taken to Israel for treatment.

According to the indictment, dozens of residents of Majdal Shams, located in the southern foothills of Mt. Hermon, ambushed an Israel Defense Forces ambulance carrying two lightly wounded Syrian nationals in June of 2015.

While driving through the town, the ambulance was stopped by a number of ATVs, and soon surrounded by an angry mob.

The medical staff locked themselves inside the ambulance, and the accompanying military police told the rioters that the patients are soldiers.

Rejecting the claim, the mob manhandled the ambulance and smashed one of its windows.

Also according to the indictment, the driver escaped the mob and drove to the nearby village of Neve Ativ, where it was seized again and the two Syrian patients were attacked. One of them was killed and two IDF soldiers were wounded.

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01.09.20

Senators Rubio and Coons pledge bill for \$3.3 billion military assistance for Israel

01.09.20

U.S. senators back bill to provide \$3.3 billion for Israel

The legislation puts into law 'Memorandum of Understanding' reached between Israelis and Americans 4 years ago; the bill was rushed due to growing tensions in the Mideast and includes provision that bans boycotting Israel

Reuters| Published: 01.09.20 , 22:35

Republican and Democratic U.S. senators introduced legislation on Thursday to provide \$3.3 billion in annual aid to Israel, seeking to put into law an aid agreement between the two countries reached in 2016 amid concern over rising Middle East tensions.

Republican Senator Marco Rubio and Democratic Senator Chris Coons co-sponsored the bill, a standalone provision of a broader measure that stalled a year ago.

The measure that stalled last year included some provisions broadly supported by members of both parties, including the aid, but it also included a plank that would have let state and local governments punish Americans for boycotting Israel.

Opponents, including many Democrats, saw that provision as an impingement of free speech.

Rubio and Coons introduced the bill amid increased tensions in the Middle East after President Donald Trump ordered a drone strike that killed Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani and Tehran retaliated with a missile attack on an Iraqi base housing U.S. soldiers.

On Thursday, the region remained on edge as Iran spurned Trump's call for a new nuclear pact and its commanders threatened more attacks.

The bill would put into law a "Memorandum of Understanding" reached between Israel and the Obama administration from four years ago that was the biggest pledge of U.S. military assistance made to any country.

In statements emailed to Reuters, Rubio said Israel faces "unprecedented threats" and Coons said: "The events of the past few days are a stark reminder of the importance of U.S. assistance to Israel's security."

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01.09.20

Rainfall in north Israel breaks 1969 record with 13.7-15.7 inches since December 25

01.09.20

Heavy rainfall in Israel's north breaks 50-year record

Meteorological services say the amount of rain recorded in the region for a 2-week period is the highest since 1969; amount of rainfall accumulated in some parts of the Western Galilee has already surpassed winter season's average

Ahiye Raved | Published: 01.09.20 , 21:31

The amount of rainfall that hit northern Israel over the past two weeks broke the country's 50-year record, meteorological services said Thursday.

Fierce storms and heavy rain pounded central and northern Israel for over a week as two storm systems hit the country one after the other. Massive flooding in cities and rivers caused major damage to homes, vehicles and infrastructure. The northern city of Nahariya, besieged by the floods, suffered the most damage from the unusually inclement weather.

Over the past two days alone, over 100 mm (3.9 inches) of rain fell in northern Israel, causing major flooding in Haifa and especially in Nahariya, where one person was killed. Moti Ben Shabbat, 38, drowned on Wednesday when he jumped into a flooded car to rescue the passengers, but was washed away by a strong floodwater current.

Several meteorological stations in the north recorded an average of 350 and 400 mm (13.7-15.7 inches) of rain that had accumulated since December 25, with some areas in the Western and Upper Galilee seeing up to 450 mm (17 inches), the highest amount measured in two-week time since January 1969.

In the northern parts of the country, the amount of rainfall that has accumulated since the beginning of January, already surpassed the month's average in the region by 140% to 180% from the same time period last year.

In Moshav Regba and Kibbutz Evron in the Western Galilee, not far from Nahariya, the amount of rain that fell since the start of the month, has surpassed the average for the entire winter season in the region.

The amount of rain along the coastal plain in the center of the country was more modest. Along the Sharon plain and the Judean Mountains between 20 and 60 mm of rain was recorded.

Unfortunately, south of the city of Ashkelon and the northern Negev, the amount of rainfall measured only a few millimeters. January's average in the region currently stands at 50% to 80% from the same time last year.

On Friday, the current storm system will begin winding down. Rain is still expected in most parts of the country, with fears of flooding across all regions. Snowfall is expected in the northern Golan Heights.

Saturday will see a mix of sun and clouds, with temperatures set to begin warming up.

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01.09.20

Gantz, Hendel, Beytenu & Liberman pressure Knesset to debate PM immunity

01.09.20

Blue & White piles on pressure for Knesset committee to debate PM immunity

Party leader Gantz and senior MK Hendel both warn Likud's Edelstein he will be ousted as Knesset speaker if he does not allow panel to form; speaker has authority to block creation of body in hope that March election will yield more favorable balance of power for the indicted prime minister

Ynet| Published: 01.09.20 , 15:12

The Blue & White party is pressing Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein to install the Knesset committee tasked with debating Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's request for parliamentary immunity, or face removal from his post.

MK Yoaz Hendel warned Thursday that Edelstein will inevitably be ousted from office if he avoids establishing the committee to discuss the last-minute request from Netanyahu, who has been indicted for bribery, breach of trust and fraud.

The current Knesset, which was elected last September but has since been dissolved pending new elections in March, has a 65-member majority in favor of the formation of the appropriate committee. However, it is in the speaker's purview to allow or block the formation of any Knesset committee.

"We will use all the means at our disposal to establish the Knesset committee," Hendel told Ynet. "I assume that Yuli Edelstein is trapped in a kind of Catch-22; I understand the political complexity he faces."

"I see with great regret what happens to all my friends in Likud as they are coerced into saying things for the sole good of Netanyahu and not the good of the country," Hendel said.

Hendel's comments came after his party leader Benny Gantz, in an ultimatum to the speaker, set Thursday as the deadline for Edelstein to allow the formation of the committee or be voted out of office by the majority of lawmakers who want the panel to be established.

"The Knesset is handicapped," Gantz said in Tel Aviv on Wednesday. "Netanyahu has decided to drag us into an expensive third election cycle just to ensure his immunity from justice."

Gantz complimented Edelstein for the way he had conducted himself over the years and said he was certain the speaker knows what the right thing to do is regarding the prime minister's immunity request.

"The Knesset speaker represents all parties and not just the ruling Likud," Gantz said, adding that since it was the prime minister himself who requested immunity it was inconceivable to think Edelstein would stop the Knesset debating the matter.

Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor Liberman also warned his party would vote to oust the speaker if he were to block a debate on immunity for the prime minister.

Edelstein insists his decision will come after he receives the recommendation of Knesset legal adviser Eyal Yinon.

Yinon had already said there is no legal impediment to allowing the committee to be chosen, triggering attacks from Likud members.

These included Justice Minister Amir Ohana, who claimed Yinon cannot give independent legal advice because his wife works for the State Prosecutor's Office, which in Ohana's view is behind the "trumped-up charges" against the prime minister.

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01.09.20

Orban: EU should be closer to Israel, U.S. stance on Iran

Hungary wants EU- NATO stance on Israel & Iran to be that held by the US

01.09.20

Orban: EU should be closer to Israel, U.S. stance on Iran

Hungarian PM says European Union 'not clear on Iranian issue'; says his country will keep troops in Iraq as long as Baghdad abides by agreement between the two governments

News Agencies| Published: 01.09.20 , 14:02

BUDAPEST - Hungary wants the European stance on the U.S.-Iran conflict to be closer that held by the United States, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Thursday. The European Union's foreign ministers meet on Friday in Brussels to discuss the Iran crisis, with a focus on easing tensions between Washington and Tehran.

"I would like for the European stance, which is not clear on this Iranian issue, to be oriented towards the Israeli-United States stance," Orban told a news conference.

Orban has warm relations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"You stand up for Israel and you stand up for the truth and I want to thank you for it," Netanyahu said during a visit to Jerusalem by Orban last year.

"It is a very important alliance," Netanyahu said of the relationship between Hungary and Israel.

European Council President Charles Michel said on Thursday he had spoken to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and urged Tehran to comply with a 2015 arms control agreement with world powers to curb its nuclear ambitions. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday urged world powers to quit the accord that Washington abandoned in 2018 and work for a new deal. Iran has rejected new talks.

Orban, who has frequently chafed at EU policy, met Trump last year, when Trump lauded him for being tough on immigration, a policy area in which the two leaders have similar visions.

The prime minister also said Thursday that his country will keep its troops stationed in Iraq as long as Baghdad abides by the agreement between the two governments.

Orban told reporters that plans were in place should the Hungarian troops need to be evacuated, which would take place "immediately" if Iraq pulls out of the agreement.

Hungary has been member of NATO since 1999 and currently has about 150 troops in Iraq's Kurdish region.

Hungarian troops are deployed in several international missions around the world, carrying out mostly tasks like peacekeeping and partnership building.

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01.09.20

Trump & Netanyahu discuss Iran issues, for NATO to take bigger role in the region

01.09.20

Trump, Netanyahu discuss regional issues in phone call - White House

POTUS says he will call on NATO to take on bigger role in region now that U.S. no longer reliant on oil from Mideast; PM congratulates Trump for acting swiftly and resolutely against Soleimani

Reuters, Ynet| Updated: 01.09.20 , 09:44

.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu discussed "critical bilateral and regional issues" in a call on Wednesday, the White House said in a statement, without giving further details.

Earlier Netanyahu came out in full support of the American president and affirmed that "Israel stands completely beside the United States" in its latest confrontation with Iran.

The prime minister said Trump is to be congratulated for "acting swiftly, boldly and resolutely," against Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Qassem Soleimani who was killed in a U.S. drone attack on his convoy near the Baghdad airport Friday. Netanyahu referred to Soleimani as "terrorist-in-chief who was the architect and driver of Iran's campaign of carnage and terror throughout the Middle East and throughout the world."

The president in a public statement, his first after U.S. forces in Iraq came under missile attack from Iran in retaliation for the killing of Soleimani, signaled he would not retaliate militarily to Iran's missile strikes.

Speaking from the White House, Trump said: "Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world."

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence later told CBS that the Iranian government instructed its proxy militias not to attack American targets.

"we're receiving some encouraging intelligence that Iran is sending messages to those very same militias not to move against American targets or civilians," Pence said.

In his address to the nation, the president also said he will call on NATO to take on a bigger role in the region now that the United States is no longer reliant on Mideast oil causing some speculation over the future of U.S. troop deployment in Iraq.

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01.09.20

crashed on Wednesday

Ukrainian airliner hit by Iran troops on high alert, used Soviet Gauntlet missile

01.09.20

Report: Ukrainian airliner brought down by anti-aircraft missile, say U.S., Iraqi officials

Newsweek magazine reports that 2 senior U.S. officials and an Iraqi intelligence source said the Ukrainian airliner, which crashed in Iran with 176 on board, was mistakenly downed by a Russian-built Tor-M1; Trump also rejects Iran's explanation of technical failure

Ynet, News agencies | Published: 01.09.20 , 19:12

The deadly crash of an Ukrainian airliner in Iran was caused by an anti-aircraft missile, said a Pentagon official, a senior U.S. intelligence official and an Iraqi intelligence official according to a report in Newsweek Thursday.

The Ukrainian International Airlines Boeing 737-800 travelling to Kiev, crashed on Wednesday, shortly after taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport, killing all 176 people on board.

According to the report, the plane is said to have been struck by a Russia-built Tor-M1 surface-to-air missile system, which NATO calls Gauntlet.

The incident occurred just hours after Iran fired at least 16 ballistic missiles on an Iraqi military base housing U.S. troops in response to the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani. The report says that U.S. officials believe that because the Iranian defense systems were on high alert following the retaliatory strike, they misidentified the Ukrainian plane as an American threat and mistakenly launched the anti-aircraft missile.

One U.S. official said U.S. satellites had detected the launch of two missiles shortly before the plane crashed, followed by evidence of an explosion.

The Pentagon declined to comment.

President Donald Trump also suggested that he believes Iran was responsible. Although he wouldn't directly lay the blame on Iran, he dismissed the Islamic Republic's initial

claim that it was a mechanical issue. "Some people say it was mechanical," Trump said. "I personally don't think that's even a question."
"Somebody could have made a mistake on the other side," Trump added, noting the plane was flying in a "pretty rough neighborhood."

The Iranian report cited witnesses on the ground and in a passing aircraft flying at a high altitude as saying the plane was on fire while in the air.

It said the three-year-old airliner, which had its last scheduled maintenance on Monday, encountered a technical problem shortly after take-off and started to head toward a nearby airport before it crashed.

The report said there was no radio communication from the pilot and the aircraft disappeared from radar at 8,000 feet (2,440 m).

The Iranian report referred to the crash as an accident.

01.08.20

Prince Harry and Meghan to 'step back' as senior UK royals

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Prince Harry and Meghan to 'step back' as senior UK royals

In a stunning declaration, the couple say they intend to become 'financially independent' and balance their time between Britain and North America; Queen Elizabeth calls the move 'complicated issue' that will take time to work through'

Associated Press| Published: 01.08.20 , 22:23

Britain's Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, said they are planning "to step back" as senior members of the royal family, a stunning revelation that underscores the wish of the couple to forge a new path for the royals in the modern world.

A statement issued by Buckingham Palace said Wednesday the royal couple intend to become financially independent, shunning public support, to underpin their work on charities. It said they intend to 'balance' their time between the U.K. and North America, where the 38-year-old Duchess of Sussex grew up.

"After many months of reflection and internal discussions, we have chosen to make a transition this year in starting to carve out a progressive new role within this institution," the couple said in a statement.

"We intend to step back as senior members of the royal family and work to become financially independent, while continuing to fully support her majesty the queen."

Queen Elizabeth's Buckingham Palace issued a statement, saying discussions with the couple over their plans were at an early stage. "We understand their desire to take a

different approach but these are complicated issues that will take time to work through," the palace said.

"Discussions with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex are at an early stage."

Harry, 35, is a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II and is sixth in line to the British throne. Before marrying Harry in 2018, the duchess was the American actress known as Meghan Markle and a star of the TV show 'Suits.' The royal couple has a baby son Archie, who was born in May 2019.

Although as an actress and human rights advocate the duchess was accustomed to media attention before her marriage, she has made no secret of the fact that the transition to the level of celebrity faced by Britain's royal family was difficult.

Last year, Harry lashed out at the British media for its treatment of his wife, accusing the media of hounding her the way they did his mother, Princess Diana, who died in a 1997 car crash while trying to elude paparazzi.

01.10.20

Iran searching black box on plane crash of 100 Iranians & 63 Canadians by 2-missiles.

01.10.20

Iran denies missile brought down plane, wants black box data

Tehran says it could take one or two months to extract information from voice and flight recorders from Ukraine International Airlines flight to Kiev that crashed shortly after takeoff from Iranian capital, while Iran on alert for U.S. military response to strike on American targets in Iraq

Reuters| Published: 01.10.20 , 13:20

Iran said Friday it wanted to download black box recordings itself from a Ukrainian airliner that crashed, killing all 176 people aboard, after Canada and others said the plane was brought down by an Iranian missile, probably by mistake.

Iran denied the Boeing 737-800 airliner had been hit by a missile, saying it could take one or two months to extract information from the voice and flight data recorders.

It said it could ask Russia, Canada, France or Ukraine if it needed help.

Tehran also said the probe might take one or two years.

Ukraine said it could not rule out a missile strike but had not confirmed this.

The Ukraine International Airlines flight to Kiev from Tehran crashed on Wednesday, when Iran was on alert for a U.S. military response hours after firing missiles at U.S. targets in Iraq.

The incident adds to international pressure on Iran, after months of tension with the United States and then tit-for-tat military strikes. Washington killed top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani last week in a drone attack in Iraq, prompting Tehran's missile launches.

On social media, many Iranians voiced anger at the authorities for not closing the airport after Iran's missile launches. Many of the passengers were Iranians with dual nationality. "We prefer to download the black boxes in Iran. But if we see that we can't do that because the boxes are damaged, then we will seek help," Ali Abedzadeh, head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, told a news conference in Tehran.

State television earlier showed the battered black boxes, saying their information could be downloaded and analysed.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, citing intelligence from Canada and other sources, has blamed an Iranian missile for bringing down the plane that had 63 Canadians on board, although he said it "may well have been unintentional."

"The evidence indicates that the plane was shot down by an Iranian surface-to-air missile," he said.

Ukraine's general prosecutor asked Canada "to provide information available to the Canadian side that may facilitate criminal investigations" into the crash.

'Erroneous strike'

France's BEA air accident agency said on it would be involved in the investigation into the Ukrainian crash.

BEA helped analyse data from the flight recorder of a Boeing that crashed in Ethiopia last year.

"It is important that as much clarity as possible is made and as quickly as possible,"

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said.

A U.S. official, citing satellite data, said Washington had concluded with a high degree of certainty that anti-aircraft missiles brought down the plane in error.

The official said the data showed the plane airborne for two minutes after departing Tehran when heat signatures of two surface-to-air missiles were detected.

There was an explosion in the vicinity and heat data showed the plane on fire as it fell.

U.S. military satellites detect infrared emissions from heat.

U.S. President Donald Trump told reporters he believed "somebody could have made a mistake."

A defense expert said the plane's radar signature would have been similar to a U.S. military transport plane.

The New York Times said it had obtained a video appearing to show an Iranian missile hitting a plane near Tehran airport.

Iran said such reports were "psychological warfare against Iran."

"All those countries whose citizens were aboard the plane can send representatives and we urge Boeing to send its representative to join the process of investigating the black box," government spokesman Ali Rabiei said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said that, after coordinating with Ottawa, a delegation of 10 Canadians were heading to Tehran to follow up on Canadian victims. Canada has no diplomatic ties with Iran.

International assistance

Iran's civil aviation organization said in an initial report less than 24 hours after the incident that the three-year-old airliner, which had its last scheduled maintenance on Monday, encountered a technical problem after takeoff and was heading to a nearby airport before it crashed.

Investigations into airliner crashes require cooperation of regulators, experts and companies across jurisdictions. They can take months and initial reports in 24 hours are rare.

Ukraine has outlined four potential scenarios, including a missile strike and terrorism. Kiev said its investigators wanted to search the crash site for possible debris of a Russian-made missile used by Iran's military.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada said it was making arrangements to tour the site after an Iranian invitation.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said it had designated a representative to join the probe.

Boeing said it would support the NTSB. The company is reeling from two deadly crashes of 737 MAX planes, including the one in Ethiopia, that led to the model's grounding last year.

The crash plane was built in 2016 and is the prior generation of the 737 before the MAX.
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01.09.20

Iran probe says Ukrainian jet was on fire before crash

01.09.20

Iran probe says Ukrainian jet was on fire before crash

Security sources suggest evidence one of jet's engines had overheated; western intelligence agencies rule out rocket fire as cause of crash

Reuters| Published: 01.09.20 , 11:28

A Ukrainian airliner was on fire immediately before it crashed southwest of Tehran, killing all 176 on board, according to an initial report by Iranian investigators.

The Ukrainian International Airlines Boeing 737-800, flying to Kyiv and carrying mostly Iranians and Iranian-Canadians, crashed shortly after taking off on Wednesday from Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport.

The report by Iran's civil aviation organization cited witnesses on the ground and in a passing aircraft flying at high altitude as saying the jet was on fire while still aloft. The three-year-old jet, which had its last scheduled maintenance on Monday, encountered a technical problem shortly after take-off and started to head toward a nearby airport before it crashed, the report said.

The technical problem was not specified in the report, which also said that there was no radio communication from the pilot and that the aircraft disappeared from radar at 8,000 feet (2,440 m).

A Canadian security source told Reuters there was evidence one of the jet's engines had overheated.

The crash happened hours after Iran launched missile attacks on U.S.-led forces in Iraq, leading some to speculate that the plane may have been hit.

The initial assessment of Western intelligence agencies was that the plane had suffered a technical malfunction and had not been brought down by a missile, five security sources - three Americans, one European and the Canadian - who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

In Kyiv, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the government was considering several possible causes of the plane crash.

In a television statement, Zelenskyy asked people to refrain from speculation, conspiracy theories and hasty evaluations regarding the crash. He also declared Jan. 9 a day of national mourning.

He said that he would speak by telephone with the Iranian president to step up cooperation into the reason for the crash.

The Ukrainian airliner took off from the Tehran airport at 6:12 a.m. local time and was given permission to climb to 26,000 feet, the report said. It crashed six minutes later near the town of Sabashahr.

Bodies and body parts recovered from the site of the crash have been taken to the coroner's office for identification, the report said.

Smoldering debris, including shoes and clothes, were strewn across a field where the plane crashed on Wednesday, where rescue workers in face masks laid out scores of body bags.

Onboard were 146 Iranians, 10 Afghans, 11 Ukrainians, five Canadians and four Swedes, the report said but noted some may have held citizenship of other countries.

Ukrainian authorities have said those on board included 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians, and 11 Ukrainians.

The Tehran-Toronto via Kyiv route was popular for Canadians of Iranian descent visiting Iran, in the absence of direct flights.

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