

## Colombian military plane crash claims dozens of lives

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: A tragic military aviation accident in Colombia has resulted in the deaths of at least 66 people after an Air Force transport aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff in the country's southern region.

According to officials, the aircraft was carrying 114 army personnel along with 11 crew members when it went down near Puerto Leguizamo in Putumayo province, close to the Peruvian border. The plane involved was a US-manufactured C-130 Hercules, commonly used for transporting troops and equipment.

Air Force Commander Carlos Fernando Silva Rueda confirmed the details of those onboard, while Defense Minister Pedro Sánchez described the incident as a devastating loss for the nation. He stated that the crash occurred during takeoff while the aircraft was on a mission transporting security forces.

Initial reports suggest that a fire broke out on board, which led to the explosion of ammunition being carried by the aircraft, worsening the impact of the crash. Emergency response teams were quickly deployed to the scene and began searching through debris for any survivors.

Military sources indicated that among the dead were 58 soldiers, six Air Force members, and two police officers. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Visuals shared by local media showed thick smoke rising from the crash site, while military vehicles rushed toward the area. Footage also captured local residents assisting injured personnel, transporting them to nearby medical facilities using motorbikes.

President Gustavo Petro expressed deep sorrow over the incident in a statement on social media, calling it a terrible tragedy that should not have occurred. He also pointed to administrative delays that have hindered efforts to upgrade military equipment, emphasizing the urgency of reform to prevent such disasters in the future.

This crash is being considered one of the most severe aviation accidents in the recent history of Colombia's Air Force.

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