

China says space debris recovered: report

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Photo taken on May 19, 2014 shows government technicians preparing to remove space debris that crashed to the ground in Qiqihar, China's Heilongjiang province

Objects that crashed to the ground in China have been identified as space debris, state media reported, after a Russian rocket carrying a communications satellite fell back to Earth minutes after lift-off.

Qiqihar city in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, which borders Russia's far east, reported that several objects appeared to have fallen from the sky on Friday, the Xinhua news agency said.

After analysis, experts have concluded they were "parts from a carrier rocket or a satellite", Xinhua said Sunday, citing the China National Space Administration.

Authorities were communicating on the issue "with relevant parties", it added.

The report came after Russia's space officials said the Proton rocket's control engine failed Friday just over nine minutes following blastoff from the Baikonur space centre Moscow leases in Kazakhstan—the latest blow to the country's once-proud space industry.

State television showed the carrier and its Express-AM4P satellite burning up in the upper layers of the atmosphere.



The space debris that crashed to the ground in Qiqihar, China's Heilongjiang province, pictured on May 19, 2014

The 150-million-euro (\$205-million) satellite—built by Airbus Group's Astrium corporation—was meant to provide Internet access to far-flung Russian regions with poor access to communication.

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