

Russian plane in deadly fire found few customers worldwide

May 6 2019, by David Mchugh



People gather around the damaged Sukhoi SSJ100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines at Sheremetyevo airport, outside Moscow, Russia, Monday, May 6, 2019. Russia's main investigative body says both flight recorders have been recovered from the plane that caught fire while making an emergency landing at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, killing at least 40 people on Sunday. (AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin)

The Aeroflot-operated SSJ100 passenger jet that caught fire during an emergency landing in Moscow is part of Russia's efforts to maintain a presence in civil aviation in a market dominated by companies like Boeing, Airbus and Embraer.

Here's a quick look at the SSJ100 and the Russian company that built it, Sukhoi Civil Aircraft:

THE PLANE

The SSJ100, or Superjet 100, is a short- to medium-haul narrow body jet with two engines that can be configured to carry up to 103 people.

At that size, it's intended for shorter and less travelled routes and as a substitute for larger planes to save costs during slower travel seasons. Regional aircraft are an important part of Russia's transportation system, given the country's enormous distances and many remote towns. The Superjet succeeds older, Soviet-built planes such as the Tu-134 airliner.

The plane is built at the Sukhoi Civil Aircraft's plant in Komsomolsk-on-Amur in Russia's distant Far East region. Although the design is Russian, the company says it uses the latest Western technology as well. The engines are made by PowerJet, a joint venture between France's Safran Aircraft Engines and Russia's Saturn.

The plane first flew in 2008 and entered commercial service in 2011. It is certified by the European Union Safety Agency but is mainly used in Russia and has not made much headway against international competitors, not just from Boeing and Airbus but also from Brazil's Embraer.



This image taken from a video distributed by Russian Investigative Committee on Sunday, May 5, 2019, shows the Sukhoi SSJ100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines on fire, at Sheremetyevo airport, outside Moscow, Russia. At least 40 people died when an Aeroflot airliner burst into flames while making an emergency landing at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, officials said early Monday. (The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation via AP)

Aeroflot is the biggest client with 50 of the planes. Mexico's Interjet said Sunday it operated five of the planes "under the highest safety standards."

Interjet has previously said it has 22 Superjets but referred in a recent earnings report to the "gradual phase out of the fleet of SSJ100." The company reported it lost sales after some planes were temporarily out of service after a warning from Russia's aviation authority about a potential defect in the tail section in December 2016. Interjet also said it was

seeking contractual recovery of maintenance costs associated with the plane.

Brussels Airlines said the company ceased using several Superjets provided by Irish leasing firm CityJet because limited supplies of spare parts affected aircraft availability.



The Sukhoi Superjet 100 aircraft of Airflot Airlines, center, is seen after an emergency landing in Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow, Russia, Sunday, May 5, 2019. (Moscow News Agency photo via AP)



This photo taken from a video distributed by Russian Investigative Committee on Monday, May 6, 2019, shows employees of the Russian Investigative Committee working at the wreckage of the Sukhoi SSJ100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines at Sheremetyevo airport outside Moscow, Russia. Russia's main investigative body says both flight recorders have been recovered from the plane that caught fire while making an emergency landing at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, killing at least 40 people. (The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation via AP)



The Sukhoi SSJ100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines, center in the background, is seen after an emergency landing in Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow, Russia, Sunday, May 5, 2019. Scores of people died when the Aeroflot airliner burst into flames while making the emergency landing at the airport Sunday evening, officials said. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)



This image taken from a video distributed by Russian Investigative Committee on Monday, May 6, 2019, shows an engine of the Sukhoi SSJ100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines in Sheremetyevo airport, outside Moscow, Russia. Russia's main investigative body says both flight recorders have been recovered from the plane that caught fire while making an emergency landing at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, killing at least 40 people. (The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation via AP)



The Sukhoi SSJ100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines, center in the background, is seen after an emergency landing in Sheremetyevo airport outside Moscow, Russia, Monday, May 6, 2019. Scores of people died when the Aeroflot airliner burst into flames while making the emergency landing at the airport Sunday evening, officials said. (AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin)

THE COMPANY

The Sukhoi Civil Aircraft Company bears the name of Soviet aircraft designer Pavel Sukhoi, who was responsible for a series of Soviet military aircraft starting before World War II.

Today's firm is part of Russia's United Aircraft Corp., which consolidated many of the legendary names of Soviet aviation such as MiG, Sukhoi and Tupolev. UAC was established by a decree from President Vladimir Putin in 2006 to promote the Russian aircraft industry, which is seen as essential for the security and defense of the

country. Much of its production goes to the military, while the SSJ100 is the key project aimed at maintaining a Russian presence in civil aviation.



In this photo taken on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, the Sukhoi SSJ-100 aircraft of Aeroflot Airlines that made an emergency landing on Sunday, May 5, 2019 in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, takes off from the Siberian city of Tyumen, Russia. Russia's flagship airline Aeroflot says the plane that caught fire at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, killing at least one person, had been forced to turn back after taking off for the city of Murmansk because of technical reasons. (AP Photo/Marina Lystseva)

TROUBLES

On May 9, 2012, a demonstration flight hit Mount Salak in Indonesia,

killing all 45 on board, after the pilot disregarded six alarms from the terrain warning system on the apparent assumption there was a problem with the terrain database, according to the report from Indonesia's air safety regulator. The plane had unintentionally left a circling pattern after the crew was distracted by a prolonged conversation not related to flying the plane.

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