

Kazakh man dies in fire following Russian rocket launch: govt.

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The Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan is the main hub for launches to the ISS

A Kazakh man died and another was hospitalised after they were caught in a fire on the steppes triggered by falling debris from a Russian space launch, emergency services said on Thursday.

The blaze, reaching 15 kilometers (9.5 miles) across, was unleashed by

parts of a rocket that fell to earth on Wednesday after launch from the nearby Baikonur cosmodrome, emergency situations committee spokesman Ruslan Imankulov told AFP.

The rocket had been used to successfully launch a supply ship destined for the International Space Station (ISS), [emergency services](#) in Kazakhstan said Thursday.

Russia's space agency Roscosmos confirmed the death in a statement on Thursday, attributing it to "difficult meteorological conditions in the fallout region," which is experiencing extremely high temperatures.

The truck the deceased man was driving was smothered by flames "as a result of a particularly strong gust of wind", the statement added.

Imankulov told AFP the local fire service had been notified by a citizen that a "dry grass fire" was raging around 40 km from the Kazakh steppe town of Zhezkazgan at around 1325 GMT on Wednesday.

The fire broke out in "the planned fallout zone" for the Soyuz 2.1a rocket, which blasted off from Baikonur at 0920 GMT (3:20 pm), according to Imankulov. The [fire](#) was extinguished by around 2100 GMT on Wednesday, he said.

Imankulov said the two Kazakhs had been working on debris-clearing for a Russian rocket-building firm, NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

Roscosmos confirmed in its press statement that they were employed by the company.

NPO Mashinostroyeniya could not be reached for comment.

The Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan is the main

hub for launches to the ISS while Zhezkazgan is the closest major town to the site where astronauts currently land on their return from the ISS.

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