

Greek F-16 Crashes in Spain Killing 11 While on NATO Maneuver



Madrid, January 27 (RHC)-- A Greek F-16 fighter jet has crashed at a military base in the southeastern Spanish city of Albacete, leaving eleven people dead. The jet crashed into other planes and burst into flames at the Los Llanos airbase while it was taking part in NATO-related maneuvers, said a Spanish defense ministry official on Monday.

Seven people were in critical condition out of the 13 injured in the incident, which sent flames and large clouds of smoke into the air. The crash occurred as the plane lost thrust while taking off and crashed into other aircraft getting ready to join a NATO Tactical Leadership Program (TLP) training exercise.

Emergency crews were not initially permitted access to the site apparently over fears that the fuel tanks of the damaged aircraft might explode. Officials are still trying to evaluate the amount of damage inflicted on other planes.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg expressed deep sadness in relation to the crash. "This is a tragedy which affects the whole NATO family," he said. "I express my heartfelt condolences to the loved ones and the nations of those who lost their lives, and I wish a speedy recovery to the injured,"

Stoltenberg said.

The TLP is an organization formed through an agreement between 10 NATO nations with the aim of boosting the effectiveness of western allied air forces. The 10 NATO countries taking part in TLP are Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United States.

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