

Bomb horror: Explosion forces passenger plane to make emergency landing in Somalia

03/02/2016 20:58 by admin

Mogadishu: Commercial airliner bound for Djibouti was forced to make an emergency landing today, after an explosion and fire blew a gaping hole in the aircraft.

The explosion happened, minutes after Airbus 321Â took off from Mogadishu , as the airliner passed between 12,000 and 14,000, before it reached its cruising altitude.

Airline officials claim two people were injured by the blast which punched a hole in the aluminum fuselage about six foot by three foot in size. It was not certain if all the passengers were accounted for.

On its Facebook page, Daallo Airlines, the national airline of Somalia, said in a statement that an Airbus 321 had "experienced an incident shortly after takeoff" from the airport in Mogadishu, Somalia.

The official, however, wouldn't provide any other details regarding injuries and did not confirm reports that an explosion may have triggered the fire.

However, there were unverified reports that a person fell out of the hole caused by the explosion. Mohamed Hassan, a police officer in nearby Balad town, said residents had found the dead body of an old man who might have fallen from a plane.

Passengers who were aboard said, they heard a loud bang and then saw smoke. As the cabin depressurized, oxygen masks deployed. Some of the 74 passengers were forced to move to the back of the jetliner as the plane descended.

Passengers reacted calmly despite the massive hole in the side of the fuselage caused by the explosion.

The aircraft's pilot Vladimir Vodopivec, 64, from Serbia said: 'I think it was a bomb. Luckily, the flight controls were not damaged so I could return and land at the airport. Something like this has never happened in my flight career. We lost pressure in the cabin. Thank god it ended well.'

"I don't know if it was a bomb or an electric shock -- but we heard a bang inside the plane," said passenger Mohamed Ali.

A source told CNN that initial tests have shown explosive residue indicating the aircraft may have been the victim of a suspected terrorist attack.

Awale Kullane, Somalia's deputy ambassador to the U.N. who was on board the flight, said on Facebook that he "heard a loud noise and couldn't see anything but smoke for a few seconds." When visibility returned they realized "quite a chunk" of the plane was missing, he wrote.

Kullane, who was going to Djibouti to attend a conference for diplomats, also posted a video showing some passengers putting on oxygen masks inside the plane. The post was later removed from his Facebook page.