

10 US citizens, 2 locals killed in Costa Rica plane crash

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SAN JOSE, Costa Rica: A plane carrying 10 U.S. citizens and two local crewmembers crashed in a wooded area, killing all aboard Sunday, Costa Rica's government said.

The Public Safety Ministry posted photographs and video of the crash site showing burning wreckage of the plane in Guanacaste, northwest Costa Rica.

Authorities said that so far they had only a list of passengers provided by the airline and were awaiting official confirmation of their identities.

At a news conference, Enio Cubillo, director of Costa Rica Civil Aviation, said the Nature Air charter flight took off just after noon Sunday from Punta Islita and was headed for the capital of San Jose when it crashed.

Cubillo said the cause was under investigation.

He identified the pilot as Juan Manuel Retana and described him as very experienced. Former Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla said via Twitter that Retana was her cousin.

The same plane had arrived in Punta Islita on Sunday morning from San Jose and was delayed in landing by strong winds, Cubillo said.

Nature Air did not respond to phone and email messages.

- AP