

# UN chief 'deeply saddened' by Ethiopia plane crash which killed more than 150 – UN staff among the dead

An Ethiopian Airlines flight crashed shortly after take off from the capital Addis Ababa on Sunday, killing more than 150 people on board. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres said [in a statement](#) that he was “deeply saddened at the tragic loss of lives” , as reports emerged that UN staff were also among the dead.

The Boeing airliner bound for the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, took off at 8:44 am local time, losing contact with air traffic control at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, just six minutes later, according to news reports. The plane was reportedly carrying passengers from more than 35 different countries.

Mr. Guterres conveyed his “heartfelt sympathies and solidarity to the victims’ families and loved ones, including those of United Nations staff members, as well as sincere condolences to the Government and people of Ethiopia”.

According to the UN Department of Safety and Security in Kenya, 19 UN staff perished in the crash. The World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) lost six staff, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights ([UNHCR](#)) lost two, as did the International Telecommunications Union ([ITU](#)). The Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) in South Sudan, [World Bank](#) and UN Assistance Mission in Somalia ([UNSOM](#)) each lost one staff member. Six staff from the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON) were also tragically killed.

The cause of the disaster is not yet known, although weather conditions were reportedly good and the plane went down in a field near Bishoftu, around 35 miles southeast of the capital.

The UN is in contact with the Ethiopian authorities and “working closely with them to establish the details of United Nations personnel who lost their lives in this tragedy” the Secretary-General stated.

The disaster happened on the eve of the [UN Environment Assembly](#) when Heads of State, environment ministers and thousands of others will convene for five days in the Kenyan capital.

## **UN officials express condolences, sadness**

Many senior UN officials took to Social Media to express their condolences and sadness. On Twitter, José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO,) sent his “[heartfelt condolences](#) and

sympathies to the bereaved families”, saying that one FAO staff member was among the victims.

Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) David Beasley tweeted that “the [WFP family mourns](#) today”, revealing that WFP staff were also among those on board the flight. “We will do all that is humanly possible to help the families at this painful time. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers”, he said.

Houlin Zhao, SecretaryGeneral of ITU tweeted his “sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the plane crash” Noting that two ITU staff were on the flight, he said: “Our colleagues in Addis are providing support to their families during this difficult time.”

“All of us at [UNICEF](#) mourn the tragic loss of our UN colleagues and all those who died in the Ethiopian Airlines crash today. May they [rest in peace](#). Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones”, Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director of the UN Children’s Fund, tweeted.

On behalf of the UN Human Settlements Programme ([UN-Habitat](#)), whose Headquarters are in Nairobi, Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif tweeted here “deepest condolences and prayers to the Great Nation of Ethiopia and to the families of the passengers and crew members who lost their lives in this tragedy. May they [rest in eternal peace](#)”.