PLANE CATCHES FIRE ON RUNWAY AT FORT LAUDERDALE AIRPORT

News / Airports / Routes

The engine of a Boeing 767 carrying 101 people **caught fire** as the plane taxied for departure Thursday at **Fort Lauderdale**-Hollywood International **Airport** in Florida, officials said. It was bound for Caracas, Venezuela.

Seventeen people were taken to Broward Health Medical Center, according to a spokeswoman there. Among those transported were a child and a trauma patient. Two of the 17 had been treated and discharged as of Thursday evening.

The pilot of an aircraft traveling behind Dynamic International Airways Flight 405 reported fuel was leaking from the aircraft before it caught fire, a Federal Aviation Administration official said. The fire occurred about 12:30 p.m. on the airport's north runway.

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"We were following this plane on the runway, and then all of a sudden, after the screams on the plane, we looked out the window and just saw the smoke," Mike Dupuy, a witness, told CNN's "Erin Burnett OutFront."

"What we saw was just tons of smoke, and we saw people evacuating," he said.

Passengers evacuated the jet via emergency slides onto the taxiway. Emergency officials responded in two minutes, and the plane was evacuated within six minutes, Broward County Sheriff's Office spokesman Mike Jachles said.

The airport was closed as emergency officials responded. It reopened shortly after 3 p.m., but airport spokesman Greg Meyer told reporters that the airport wouldn't operate at 100% until the north runway could be reopened.

He pointed out that firefighters still had their nozzles aimed at the jet in case it flared up again.

"It's still going to be hot," Meyer said, adding that the runway couldn't be opened until fire and rescue crews cleared the taxiway and the runway was inspected for damage and debris.

As of late Thursday, Meyer said that 219 flights were delayed as a result of the incident and 43 flights were canceled.

Audio from the air traffic control tower caught one of the pilots saying, "The left engine looks like it's leaking a lot of fuel. There is fluid leaking out of the left engine."

Fewer than 30 seconds later, as the tower was contacting the ramp so the Dynamic jet could return to the airport, a pilot said, "Engine's on fire. Engine's on fire."

Images and video from passengers who were at the airport or on other planes showed plumes of dark gray smoke billowing from the red-and-white jet.

An ambulance, fire truck and other emergency vehicles were on the scene in one of those photos, while another witness posted video of emergency responders dousing the plane with hoses.

Footage from local media showed a woman on a gurney, her ankle wrapped in what appeared to be an ice pack, being wheeled into the hospital.

Spokesman Jachles said that injuries ranged from knee, chest and back pain, to complaints of anxiety.

"In all, we had approximately two dozen people, 22 to 24 people, that ended up as what we considered patients, or walking wounded," he said.

Two calls to Dynamic International Airways' headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina, were both met with "no comment" on the fire. The airline serves new York, Fort Lauderdale, Venezuela and Guyana, according to its website, and an email from the company says the airline flies to Orlando, Brazil, Hong Kong and Palau.

In a series of Spanish tweets replying to those concerned about the fire, Dynamic said there was "a failure in one of the engines." All passengers were safely evacuated, the airline tweeted, promising an official statement "soon.

That statement said that the crew "shut down the engine and evacuated the aircraft" after learning

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of an engine problem. Dynamic said it was investigating the matter and was working to make arrangements for passengers affected by the flight disruption. It plans to operate per its normal schedule beginning Friday, the statement said.

The National Transportation Safety Board is sending a four-person team to Fort Lauderdale to investigate the fire, the agency tweeted. Boeing announced later it will provide technical assistance during the investigation.

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