

Afghan airline repatriates Ukrainians killed in hotel attack

Travel

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The attack on the Intercontinental came weeks after a private company took over the hotel's security, which multiple visitors described as lax in the run-up to the incident.

By Agence France Presse as published in The Daily Star, Beirut, Lebanon, Jan 24, 2018: KABUL: The remains of seven Ukrainian Kam Air employees murdered by Taliban gunmen were loaded onto a plane at Kabul airport Wednesday to be repatriated, following a somber ceremony days after the attack on a luxury hotel. Afghan officials and executives from the airline oversaw a brief memorial service where caskets draped in blue and yellow Ukrainian flags were adorned with wreaths and framed portraits of the deceased. "It is a disaster for us," Kam Air CEO Samad Osman Samadi told AFP. "It will take us a while to recover because we lost our professional crew. We also used their experience to train our Afghan pilots." The airline lost nine personnel including five pilots and four crew members during the 12-hour attack on the state-run Intercontinental Hotel on the weekend. Kam Air officials said seven of the nine victims were from Ukraine. There were also two from Venezuela, whose bodies will be repatriated in the coming days. At least 40 Kam Air employees were at the Intercontinental, which is not part of the global InterContinental chain, when gunmen began slaughtering guests and employees Saturday night, killing at least 22 people, including 14 foreigners. Most of the airline staff survived by hiding in their rooms, waiting in silence as the gunmen went from door to door breaking them open and killing those inside. [⋮]
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