

20 Evangelical Pastors Among the 110 Killed in Cuba Plane Crash

Ten evangelical pastoral couples were killed when a plane crash shortly after takeoff in Cuba Friday.

According to the Nazarene website, these couples were at a three-day National Conference in Havana, returning home to the Province of Holguín.

The deceased are:

1. Mirza Rodríguez Rondón and Juan Luis Vega Velázquez
2. Luis Manuel Rojas Pérez and Maricela Peña
3. Norma Suárez Niles and Jesús Manuel García Oberto
4. María Virgen Filandez Rojas and Rafael Vega Velázquez
5. Ronni Alain Pupo Pupo and Yurisel Milagros Miranda Mulet (NMI president)
6. Eloy Ortiz Abad and Elva María Mosqueda Legrá
7. Juan Carlos Nogueras Leyva and Noelbis Hernández Guerrero
8. Gelover Martín Pérez Avalo and Yoneisi Cordovez Rodríguez (pastor and district treasurer)
9. Manuel David Aguilar Saavedra and María Salomé Sánchez Arévalo (district secretary)
10. Grisell Filandes Clark and Lorenzo Boch Bring

"They were men and women faithful to God, to their families, to their neighbors and to the people," Rev. Leonel Lopez, the head of Cuba's Nazarene church, tells *The New York Times*.

"In this moment of anguish and pain, we ask for your prayers and help to be able to get through this situation together," Lopez says.

The plane crash was the deadliest air disaster in 30 years, Reuters reports, with 110 of the 113 on board dying.

According to Reuters, President Miguel Diaz-Canel visited the morgue over the weekend, which is the first big test of his presidency after taking the reins from Raul Castro last month.

Some locals who saw the crash say one of the engines appeared to have caught fire before the plane hit the ground.

“The plane was on fire, it flipped and then nosedived,” said farmer Marino Perez Alvaredo.