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<u>Asia-Plus</u>

Two Tajik helicopters detained in Afghanistan

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DUSHANBE – Two Mi-8 helicopters belonging to Tajik national air carrier, Tajik Air, and twelve crew members have been held by the Afghan authorities for a month.

"The helicopters worked in Afghanistan under the contract and they were supposed to return home a month ago, but they were detained by the Ministry of Transport of Afghanistan because the helicopters were allegedly going to leave the Kabul airport without preliminary permission of the control service of the Kabul airport," flight engineer Ilhom Qayumov told reporters in a phone interview. The Ministry of Transport, however, then withdrew its claim and at present, the Ministry of Defense and the Security Service of Afghanistan are holding the helicopters and the crew members, Qayumov added. According to him, they did not explain the reason for detention of them.

The crew members are currently held at the house on the outskirts of Kabul.

The Tajik authorities have not yet officially commented on the situation.