



REUTERS FACT CHECK

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Fact Check-British Airways is not in 'crisis talks' with the government over vaccinated pilots

By Reuters Fact Check



Claims that British Airways is in “crisis talks” with the British government due to the deaths of three pilots who received COVID-19 shots are unfounded, a company representative and British medicines regulator spokesperson has told Reuters.

Shared in the form of a voice recording on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, an unidentified male says he has spoken to a “friend who’s a BA pilot” and explains “things are getting crazy” after three fellow pilots passed away ([here](#) , [here](#) and [here](#)).

“They’ve had the third BA pilot die in the last seven days, yeah? Third pilot dead in the last week,” says the man heard in the recording. “The first two guys were in their forties and fifties; this guy, mid-thirties, perfectly fit, no underlying conditions. He gets his second jab and he’s dead within days, exactly the same with the first two.

“Because of this, BA are now in crisis talks with the government about whether to allow vaccinated pilots to fly. The issue with that of course is that about 80%, according to my friend in BA, 80-85% have been injected.”

The man then goes on to say only “10% of pilots will be able to fly,” branding it a “serious issue”.

On Twitter, some users have also shared a photo of what appears to be four books of condolence next to framed pictures of four men in a British Airways-themed lounge ([here](#)).

“I believe it was actually FOUR young pilots who died due to the Maxine,” tweeted one user.



Reuters presented the claims to British Airways, which said they were unfounded and that no such talks were underway with the government. The spokesperson, however, confirmed the authenticity of the four condolence books, as four company pilots had recently passed away. “Our thoughts are with their family and friends,” they said, adding that none of the deaths was linked to vaccines.

In a statement to Reuters, the UK’s Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) also denied any such crisis talks with Britain’s flagship air carrier.

“We have not been made aware of deaths of BA pilots after receiving the Covid-19 vaccine and have not had discussions with BA or other airlines, about preventing pilots from flying after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine,” said Dr. Sarah Branch, the director of vigilance and management of medicines for the MHRA. “There are currently no restrictions on ion or other industries and activities post vaccination.

“Our advice remains that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks in the majority of people. It is still vitally important that people come forward for their vaccination and for their second dose when invited to do so.

“We ask anyone who suspects they have experienced a side effect linked with their COVID-19 vaccine to report it to the Coronavirus Yellow Card website.”

VERDICT

False. British Airways is not in “crisis talks” with the British government about vaccinated pilots. Four pilots have recently died – and British Airways says none of these is linked to vaccines.

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