

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) -- A large cargo plane crashed at the end of a runway and split in two while trying to take off Sunday at Brussels airport, authorities said

Four of the five crew members on board the Boeing 747 were slightly injured and were hospitalized, said Jan Van der Cruysse, spokesman at Brussels Airport.

"The plane is very seriously damaged," he said. The aircraft cracked in two after it crashed at the end of runway 220, which lies very close to a rail line and houses.

Rail services to and from the airport were suspended as a safety precaution, however the crash did not affect other flights at the airport, Van der Cruysse said.

Francis Vermeiren, mayor of the nearby town of Zaventem, said the plane did not catch on fire when it crashed after attempting to take off. Vermeiren was coordinating rescue efforts at the airport.

Vermeiren said the pilot told rescue authorities he heard a large noise while trying to take off just after midday. It was not yet clear what caused the crash.

"The plane is not on fire but it has split into two," he told VRT radio.

Firefighters coated the wings of the plane with special fire retardant foam as a precaution because the plane was still full of jet fuel, the mayor said.

He said the plane was on a scheduled flight to Bahrain. It was not known what cargo the plane was carrying.

Vermeiren said the pilot told rescue authorities he heard a large noise while trying to take off just after midday. It was not yet clear what caused the crash.

The plane is owned by Kalitta Air, a cargo carrier based at Willow Run Airport near Ypsilanti, Michigan, and makes regular flights from Brussels, officials said. A person who answered the telephone at Kalitta Air said Sunday morning that no one was immediately available to comment.