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U.S. drone crashes in Seychelles, second in four months

VICTORIA (Reuters) - A U.S. drone crash-landed at the Seychelles main airport and careered into the ocean on Wednesday, the second remotely piloted MQ-9 Reaper aircraft to crash on the Indian Ocean archipelago in four months.

The Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) said the aircraft had technical problems soon after taking off and tried to land at Seychelles International Airport on the main island of Mahe.

"It touched down on the runway and bounced a few times before ending (in) the sea at the extreme southern end of the runway," the SCAA said in a statement.

A Reuters witness said police prevented reporters from entering a public area next to the end of the runway.

There was no immediate comment from the U.S. embassy and it was not clear what the drone's mission had been.

A classified U.S. diplomatic cable dated 2009 showed that unmanned aircraft carried out missions over Somalia and the Horn of Africa from the Seychelles. Local officials say drones based in the archipelago are also tracking pirates in regional waters.

(Reporting by George Thande; Editing by Richard Lough and Tim Pearce)