



# Five military officers, 12 civilians feared dead in plane crash

**BEN EGUZOZIE, Calabar & EHIDIAMEN ISIBOR**  
*Abuja*

**F**ive military officers and 12 civilians were feared dead when a light military Dornier aircraft crashed yesterday afternoon at Ojugi village in Vandekiya Local Government area of Benue State.

According to sources in Calabar, the aircraft took off from Abuja en route to Obudu Catle Ranch in Cross River State.

A source in Calabar said the

plane could not land at the Bebi airstrip in Obudu.

However, the director of information of the Defence Headquarters, Felix Chukwuma, a brigadier-general, yesterday in Abuja, confirmed the accident to BusinessDay in a telephone interview.

He said, "There was an air crash today (yesterday) involving a light military aircraft with 17 military officers on board. Though details are still sketchy, we believe there are survivors."

Airport officials in Calabar

could not comment on the crash when our correspondent called them. When our correspondent got to the Margaret Ekpo International Airport in Calabar at 7pm. yesterday, he saw some military officials arriving from Abuja. Among them were Chief of Army Staff Andrew Azazi and Chief of Air Staff Paul Dike.

Although none of them spoke with our correspondents, it was gathered that they were there to inspect the crash site.

Efforts to reach the Cross River Tourism Bureau, manag-

ers of the Obudu ranch, failed as their cell-phones rang endlessly without any response.

As at the time of filling this report, information was still sketchy about the identity of the military aircraft as well as the identities of the passengers.

Meanwhile, an agency report said the military aircraft left Abuja yesterday afternoon for the ranch, A BBC report also quoted a Nigerian air force official as saying that some of the passengers of the ill-fated plane were rescued.