

Missing aircraft: SSS quizzes NAMA MD, others

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AS the search for the missing Beech Craft 1900D intensifies, the State Security Services (SSS) has interrogated

officials of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) over their roles in the alleged doctoring of the transcript of the voice flight record between the pilot of the aircraft and the

control tower officials at the Port Harcourt International Airport (PHIA).

A source in the presidency, said the decision to quiz the

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officials of the agency followed discovery by the 11-man committee set up by the federal government on the missing aircraft that the transcript was not only doctored, but the tape containing the recording had been deleted.

The source told *Daily Champion* that those interrogated are the Managing Director (NAMA), Captain Ado Sanusi, Director, Air Traffic Services, Mr Olapha B. Stephen, Director, Technical Services, Engr. Eze and General Manager, Search and Rescue, Mr. A. Adedara.

Missing Aircraft

The presidency source who pleaded anonymity said given the sensitive nature of the assignment the committee in the course of its sitting discovered to its dismay that 'the Port Harcourt International Airport voice tapes were tampered with.'

Although the committee is yet to conclude its assignment, the source said preliminary findings pointed to the fact that 'it was apparent that the Air Traffic Controllers at the Port Harcourt International Airport misled the pilot of the missing aircraft, which could have been

responsible for the missing of the aircraft and officials he said are trying to cover their tracks."

The source said although the airline has its own procedure and charts on how to get to the Bebi airstrip in Obudu, Cross River State, but Captain Augustine Egbedi who was described as an experienced pilot with close to 10,000 flying hours opted for the official NAMA route apparently because he had not flown to the airstrip before then and preferred the official government route.

"According to information available to us, the Port Harcourt

controller told the pilot to contact Enugu tower but the pilot initially refused and insisted on flying the (NAMA) route which would take him straight to Bebi. He however contacted Enugu later and the controller cleared him to descend to 5000ft.

"From a professional point of view, it is clear that the controllers do not know the topography of the terrain that the missing plane was flying. That was why the flight was cleared for 5000ft by the Enugu controller. Bebi sits behind a 6000ft mountain. The minimum safe height at that position is 11200ft" he said.