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Another Air Crash Claims Seven In Kaduna

By Saxone Akhaine (Northern Bureau Chief) Karls Tsokar (Abuja) and Gbenga Akinfenwa (Lagos) on August 30, 2015

*Rescue workers at the scene of the crash ... yesterday.*

- *'Boko Haram Spy' Nabbed At Abuja Airport*
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BARELY three weeks after a helicopter crashed in Lagos State killing six persons, a Dornier-228 plane went down in Kaduna State, yesterday, killing all seven persons on board.

The aircraft was en route Abuja from the Kaduna Military Airfield when it crashed few minutes after a 6.45am take off. The plane fell between two houses at Ribadu Cantonment, Kaduna, sparking a fire, which emergency workers battled to contain.



Security personnel immediately secured the scene, as men of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) evacuated the remains of the victims, and the wreckage of the aircraft.

Air Force Director of Public Relations, Air Commodore Dele Alonge, confirmed the incident, saying there were no survivors among the persons on board.

He noted that the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar, aborted an official trip to Port Harcourt to visit the scene of the disaster, and "families of some of the deceased personnel, in company of the Air Officer Commanding Training Command, Air Vice Marshal Alikali Mamu."

Alonge disclosed that the Chief of Air Staff has set up a panel to investigate the cause of the crash. The statement by the Air Force reads in part: "A Dornier-228 aircraft, with call sign NAF030, crashed into a house at Ribadu Cantonment, Kaduna.

Though no casualty was recorded on ground, there were no survivors among the passengers on board. The aircraft was Abuja bound...Bodies of the passengers have been recovered."

A military source at the scene said the seven deceased persons included an Air Officer's wife and her two children. A woman, identified as sister to the late officer's wife, said: "I dropped my sister at the Air Force airport early this morning."

According to her, the officer's wife and children had come to her house to spend some time and were on their way back to Abuja when the aircraft went down. "When I came to this place, this morning, they told me that my sister and her two kids have been taken to the medical centre.

I have gone round the entire hospital but I can't find my sister and her children," she said anxiously. The Dornier-228 is described as "the most versatile and most advanced high-wing aircraft in its class," a reason "authorities all over the world count on it when it comes to demanding special missions of various kinds."

Its core features are said to include "long range, high utilisation rates and high payload...at impressively low operational costs." Nigerians also watched with horror Wednesday August 12, 2015, as rescuers pulled from the lagoon bodies of victims of a crashed Bristow helicopter (registration number 5N – BDG – 760540), which had been travelling from one of the nation's oil platforms to Lagos.

The aircraft had 12 persons on board, including the crew. Yesterday's incident is coming on the heels of similarly fatal crashes around the world, in August.

Air traffic control lost contact with an ATR 42-300 turboprop aircraft belonging to Trigana Air Service in Indonesia August 16. Three days later, rescue workers discovered the wreckage of the plane, which had 44 adult passengers, five children and five crewmembers.

There were no survivors. On August 22, a military Hawker Hunter jet crashed on a busy highway during an air show in southeastern England, killing 11 people.

The Department of State Services (DSS), meanwhile, has confirmed the arrest, last week, of an alleged 14-year-old Boko Haram spy at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja.

According to a statement signed by DSS spokesman, Tony Opuiyo, operatives in collaboration with security personnel at the airport "disrupted a spying network mounted by Boko Haram terrorists."

The boy, Sulaimon Abdulrahman (aka Sunday Ajayi), from Kogi State, was arrested while allegedly trying to get information on routine processes at the busy nation's gateway August 24, 2015.

Opuiyo said a man, Dauda Sadiq (aka Peter), now at large, assisted the suspect to breach the airport security. The statement reads: "Abdulraman has disclosed, among others, that he infiltrated the airport with the assistance of one Dauda Sadiq who is presently at large.

Abdulrahman further revealed that Dauda Sadiq directed him to spy on the installation and pass to him information in respect of travelers' movement including passenger screening, boarding procedures and other processes in the departure and arrival halls."

This, according to the statement, has informed the boosting of security and renewed partnership with other security operatives at the airport. The statement enjoined the public to remain resolute, have confidence in the country's security agencies, and also provide them with information when necessary.

One of the modus operandi of the terrorist organisation has been the use of minors for suicide missions and gathering of intelligence, as persons in that age bracket often attract lesser suspicion. "With this knowledge, the Service is working closely with major aviation stakeholders, especially the Aviation Security Department, to forestall any possible attack and ensure adequate security at the airports.

This is aside other measures, which have been put in place to ensure protection of lives and property across the country," Opuiyo said. Also, Kaduna State governor, Malam Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, yesterday, commiserated with families of the persons that lost their lives in the incident. "I received news of the plane crash with sadness.

We offer our deep condolence to the families bereaved by this incident. May Almighty God grant their souls eternal rest and uphold their families in this moment of grief and sorrow," El-Rufai said in a statement signed by his spokesman, Samuel Aruwan.

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