

Helicopter crash: We are grateful to God, say residents

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Wreckage of Quorum Aviation Limited helicopter that crashed into a residential building on Salvation Road, Opebi, Lagos being retrieved by officials of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and others at the scene ...yesterday PHOTO: SUNDAY KINLOLU

- **Pilot, Crew Die, As AIB Begins Probe**
- **Tinubu, Sanwo-Olu Commiserate With Victims' Families**



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1 hour ago

Some residents of Salvation Road in Opebi area of Ikeja, Lagos, have expressed shock over the crash of a helicopter into a building on the street, thanking God for saving their lives.

The residents, who spoke at the scene of the incident, yesterday, called for proper maintenance of aircraft before flying. One of them, Mrs. Grace Awolaja, told journalists at the scene that it was shocking and surprising to experience such an unexpected incident.

She disclosed that the helicopter was seen hovering in the sky for some minutes before crashing into the building, adding: "We thank God that nobody in the building was affected, but I learnt that the pilot and two people died."

Another resident, Alhaji Saliu Bamidele, reckoned that engine seizure might be responsible for the crash, noting that the helicopter crashed at the back of house No. 16, Salvation Road, damaging two cars and the fence of the building.

A fabric shop owner in front of the building, Mr. Mark Okeke, explained that the helicopter, which was sited in the air struggling to crash-land in the canal, "suddenly picked up and faced the building."

"We just heard loud sound with heavy dust from the house. Many occupants of the building were not at home. However, the pilot and two others on board of the helicopter were found dead," he added.

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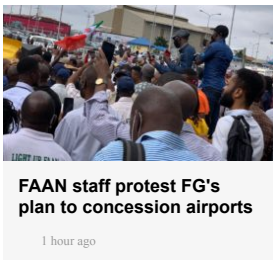


The light Bell 206B3 helicopter, with registration Number 5N-BQW, belonging to Quorum Aviation Limited, crashed into residential apartments, killing its pilot and one of two crewmembers onboard when it lost control and dropped into the compound of No. 16, Salvation road, Opebi.

The helicopter, which was on its way from Port Harcourt to Lagos, crashed a few minutes to touchdown at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos. First responders said the two victims died on the spot, while the other crewmember was rescued and taken to Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), Ikeja.

Though there was no fire, the aircraft was a total wreck from impacts of crashing on a fence and a parked car. Acting Coordinator, Lagos Territorial Office of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Ibrahim Farinloye, confirmed that the incident occurred about 12.47pm.

He also confirmed that two persons died immediately, while one person, who was taken to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) for treatment, eventually died.



“The helicopter, Bell 206, with registration number 5N-BQW, which was returning from training in Port Harcourt, crashed into a building at 16A Salvation Road in Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos,” Farinloye said.

The Accident Investigations Bureau (AIB) equally confirmed the incident, saying emergency services operators were immediately deployed to the scene. Its General Manager, Public Affairs, Tunji Oketunbi, said the Bureau’s investigators were also on ground at the scene of the incident, assuring that the agency would begin investigations into the crash immediately.

Oketunbi, who arrived the scene shortly after the crash, said AIB was notified by the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) at about 12:30pm, adding: “There were three passengers on board – two fatalities and one hospitalised. As the investigating agency, AIB needs and hereby solicits for assistance of the general public. “We want the public to know that we would be amenable to receiving any video clip, relevant evidence or information any member of the public may have of the accident that can assist us with this investigation. “The Bureau will appreciate that the general public and press respect the privacy of the people involved and not assume the cause of the accident until formal report is released.” Quorum, in a statement signed by its management, said as soon as it received news of the accident, it promptly informed the aviation authorities, AIB and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA). “Preliminary reports indicate that of the three souls on board – all crew, two of the crew members lost their lives, whilst the third one is currently receiving treatment at a hospital. “We have been made to understand that nobody in the building nor in the vicinity was injured, for which we are grateful.

“In accordance with aviation regulations, the AIB has taken over the investigation process. We hereby ask members of the public to await the outcome of the investigation. We hereby express our heartfelt condolences to the families of the crew who lost their loved ones in this tragic accident,” the airline’s statement read in part. Quorum Aviation was incorporated in 2011 as an indigenous aviation logistics company to pursue opportunities in the rotary (helicopter) business, primarily for oil and gas clients, as well as VIP charter services. Meanwhile, All Progressives Congress (APC)

national leader, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, has commiserated with families, relations and friends of those who lost their lives in the crash. Tinubu, in a statement by his media office, prayed that Almighty Allah consoles the families of the victims and grants the deceased eternal rest, while wishing the survivor soonest recovery.

Also, Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, while commiserating with families, friends and associates of the victims, promised that his government would work with all the relevant Federal Government agencies to unravel the remote and immediate cause of the accident, so as to prevent a reoccurrence.

The governor advised residents of Opebi and its surroundings to go about their businesses peacefully, saying: “There is nothing to fear, as men and officers of the state emergency services were promptly deployed to the scene, brought everything under control and the environment is also safe and secure.” He prayed that God would grant the deceased eternal rest and the families they left behind the fortitude to bear the irreplaceable loss.



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