

Boko Haram: Two Pilots Feared Killed, As NAF Fighter Jet Crashes In Borno



By Ubong Ukpong On Apr 2, 2021

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The Nigerian Air Force, (NAF), says it was still hopeful that two of its pilots in the NAF fighter aircraft that went missing on Thursday while on a mission against the Boko Haram insurgents in Borno State were still alive.

Air Commodore Edward Gabwet, Director of Public Relations and Information, (DOPRI) of the NAF, in an update, released on Friday,, in Abuja, had listed the two pilots as “Flight Lieutenant John Abolarinwa and Flight Lieutenant Ebiakpo Chapele.”

While speaking with Independent Newspaper, in Abuja, regarding his update on the unfortunate incident, Gabwet said that the Service had already interfaced with the families of the gallant pilots, assuring them on the NAF’s efforts to ensure their rescue.

The NAF had on Thursday, raised the alarm that its Alpha- Jet aircraft on mission in Borno state was missing.

It disclosed that at about 5:08 pm on 31 March 2021, the Alpha-Jet lost contact with radar in Borno State, while on interdiction mission in support of ground troops.

The mission, the NAF said, was part of the ongoing counterinsurgency operations in the North East.

Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, in his update on Friday, had said that “Intelligence report gathered by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) indicates that the Alpha Jet aircraft (NAF475) that went off the radar with 2 crew members on board on 31 March 2021 might have crashed.

“The cause of the crash as well as the whereabouts of the 2 pilots remain unknown. The pilots are Flight Lieutenant John Abolarinwa and Flight Lieutenant Ebiakpo Chapele.

“Extensive search and rescue efforts are still ongoing by NAF surveillance aircraft as well as NAF Special Forces and Nigerian Army troops on ground”, Gabkwet stated.

He added that at this point, the NAF was not ruling out anything regarding the incident, as it remained very hopeful that the crew would soon be found and rescued.

If the said intelligence by the NAF on the missing air craft eventually becomes true, this would be the second aircraft that crashed, killing all crew members on board, in less than two months, since Air Marshal Oladayo Amao became Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) in about three months ago.

Only about two months ago, a NAF aircraft on a mission to rescue abducted schoolchildren in Niger state, crashed in Abuja, killing all seven personnel on board.