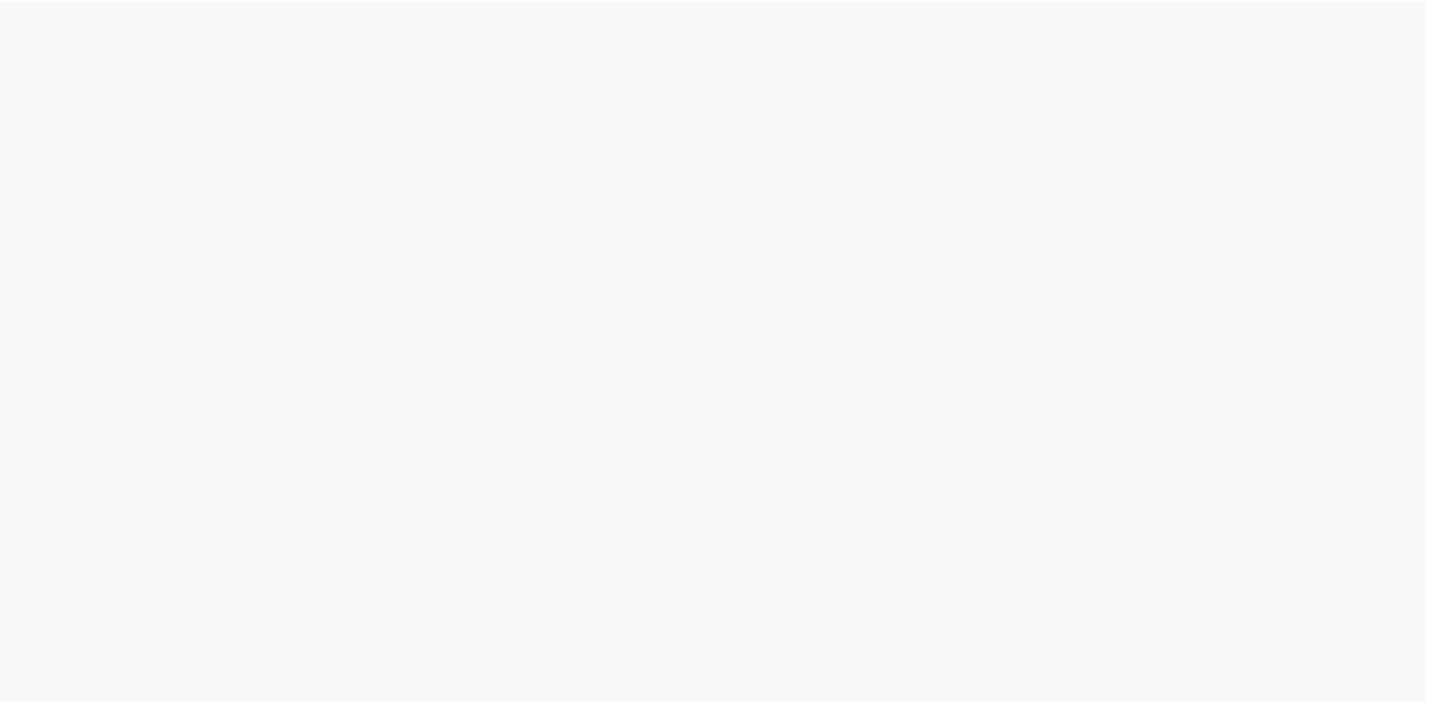


Buhari, Tinubu, Sanwo-Olu mourn as helicopter crashes into Lagos home, kills all 3 onboard

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Chinelo Obogo And Lawrence Enyoghasu

A Bell 206 helicopter with registration number 5N-BQW operated by Quorum Aviation Limited yesterday crashed into a residential building at 16A Salvation Road, Opebi, Ikeja Lagos, killing two on the spot including the pilot while one of the three persons on board the ill-fated flight survived and was rushed to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, LASUTH, where he later died.

The crash, which caused commotion in the area attracted a huge crowd as rescue agencies tried to control the surge, evacuate victims and investigate the incident. It was gathered that the helicopter took off from Port Harcourt and was already approaching its destination in Lagos when it suddenly showed signs of distress before hitting the floor of the compound, ramming its tail boom into the wall demarcating house 16A and 14, creating a hole in the fence. Two cars; a Toyota Camry and a Honda Accord were also damaged in the compound by the impact of the crash.



According to the Director-General of Lagos State Emergency Management Authority (LASEMA), Dr Olufemi Oke-Osanyitolu, the incident occurred around 12:17pm. He also confirmed the fatality, adding that all the victims were male.

“We have deposited the two bodies in the mortuary. We are on top of challenges especially, crowd control operation is ongoing,” he stated. The cause of the accident has not been ascertained by the relevant agency.

Also at the scene were officials of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA led by Ibrahim Farinloye. “When we received the distress alert with the coordinate, we rushed down and met the fire services here,” he stated.

The state Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu who was also at the scene debunked insinuations that the helicopter was carrying police personnel or that it belongs to the police

“We should give glory to God that the helicopter landed in an open area in the compound. What was hard was to control the crowd. The crowd should not be angry and should stop calling for the heads of the aviation company because it is an accident. As we have gathered, the pilot tried to make a safe landing. He saved many lives by doing his work perfectly,” he stated.

Already, the Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) has confirmed the recovery of the Black Box of the helicopter.

An eyewitness who craved anonymity told *Saturday Sun* that victims belongings including phones were stolen by the people around before the police arrived.

“It was pathetic but what was painful was that people stole the phones of the dead some minutes after the crash. When the aircraft wanted to crash, it was as if the pilot was trying to lie horizontally in the compound,” he stated.

Quorum Aviation confirmed that the helicopter involved in the crash belongs to them. In a statement, the management of the company said it has confirmed that two people lost their lives in

the accident and that it is cooperating with the Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) in ascertaining the cause of the accident.

“A light helicopter belonging to Quorum Aviation with registration Number 5N-BQW flying from Port-Harcourt to Lagos crashed between two buildings in Ikeja en-route to Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos.

“As soon as we received news of the accident, we promptly informed the aviation authorities, Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA).

“Preliminary reports indicate that of the three people 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 said.

Meanwhile, AIB has said the cause of the accident was still being investigated and it will make its findings public as soon as investigations are over.

“Accident Investigation Bureau was notified by Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) at about 12:30pm on 28 August, 2020 and has commenced investigation into an accident involving a Helicopter Bell 206B3 with the nationality registration marks 5N-BQW operated by Quorum Aviation coming from Port Harcourt to Lagos, which occurred on the 28 August, 2020 at the Opebi Area of Ikeja Lagos.

“Three passengers on board – two fatalities and one hospitalised.

As the investigating agency, AIB needs and hereby solicits for your assistance. We want the public to know that we would be amenable to receiving any video clip, relevant evidence, or information any members 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,” AIB said.

However, *Saturday Sun* later learnt that while the captain of the helicopter, Chika Ernest and the engineer on board, Clement Ndiok both died on impact, the fitter whose identity wasn't ascertained

at press time died at LASUTH shortly after he was admitted. His death was later confirmed by AIB's spokesperson, Tunji Oketunbi.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has commiserated with families, friends, and associates of the victims.

According to Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, Buhari prayed that God will console the bereaved families, grant peace to the souls of the dead and speedy recovery for the injured, while the nation awaits the report of the investigation into the accident by aviation regulatory agencies.

Also, All Progressives Congress National Leader, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, condoled families, relations, and friends of the victims, while calling on the aviation authorities to investigate the cause of the crash. He wished the survivor of the crash speedy recovery.

The State governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu has also commiserated with families, friends and associates of the victims of the unfortunate helicopter crash.

In a condolence message, Governor Sanwo-Olu 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 in the future.

The governor advised residents of Opebi and its surrounding to go about their business peacefully saying, "there is nothing to fear as men and officers of the State emergency services were promptly deployed to the scene of the crash and they had brought everything under control. The environment is also safe and secure."



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