

# Suspected Stowaway Crushed at Lagos Airport Runway

May 21, 2022 11:37 am



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There is strong suspicion that the mangled body found on the international runway of the Murtala Muhammed Airport Lagos, was that of a stowaway that fell off the wheel-well of an aircraft that was taxing to take off.

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), which confirmed the incident in a terse statement, signed by its spokesperson, Mrs. Faithful Hope-Ivbaze said, "The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria wishes to inform the general public of an incident in which an unidentified human remains were found on Runway 18R/36L on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

"A motorised cleaner, who was cleared to carry out a derruberisation and sweeping of the runway discovered the remains at about 0106hours, and escalated the situation to relevant departments.

"As a result, between 0110 (1:10a.m.) and 0343 (3:45a.m.) hours, the runway was temporarily closed to allow for immediate evacuation of the remains. Flight operations resumed at 0343 hours."

Other informed sources that gave details about the dead body, said that the Aviation Security (AVSEC), the Nigerian Police, the Department of State Service (DSS) and the Nigerian Air Force

jointly took the body for further investigation and were working on the suspicion that the body was that of a stowaway.

THISDAY learnt that the body might have dropped from the aircraft in the night of Wednesday and was being crushed by many aircraft that landed and took off that night.

FAAN source told THISDAY that when the body was discovered it was taken off the runway and the blood stains washed off, insisting that the runway was closed for the aforementioned period but there was no flight diversion because during that time most flights have taken off to their destinations.

“We read the report that flights were diverted but that was not true. You know that there is very light traffic on that runway in the morning, so we just closed it to enable us remove the body and wash the place.

“Our first suspicion is that it might be a stowaway, but the security operatives will confirm that and get back to us,” the FAAN official said.

A police officer abreast of the incident disclosed that a phone was found in the trousers pocket of the deceased but subscriber identity module (sim) card was not in it, but there was a memory card in the phone.

The Air Traffic Controller who spoke to THISDAY reinforced the fact that no flight was diverted and a source close to Ethiopian Airlines stated that the East African carrier’s flight to Lagos is usually in the afternoon, not at the period the body was removed at the runway.

Murtala Muhammed Airport has the record of many persons who attempted to stowaway from Nigeria to other parts of the world.

Many of them died in the attempt and the only survivor ever recorded was a young man who was able to hide in the spares compartment of the aircraft, Boeing B747, operated by Medview Airlines in July 2017.

The aircraft type is the only one that has such compartment, but others would hide in the aircraft undercarriage compartment, known as wheel-well and were either crushed or killed by extreme cold when the aircraft climbed to higher altitude.