



NEWS RELEASE

NSIB CLARIFIES NUMBER OF RECOVERED BODIES FOLLOWING HELICOPTER DITCHING INCIDENT NEAR BONNY FINIMA

[Abuja, Nigeria, October 27, 2024]

The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) wishes to correct recent misinformation concerning the ongoing recovery operations for the Sikorsky SK76 helicopter, registration 5N BQG, operated by Eastwind Aviation, which ditched into the Atlantic Ocean near Bonny Finima on Thursday, October 24, 2024. There were eight persons onboard the aircraft at the time of the incident.

Contrary to reports suggesting that five bodies have been recovered, we confirm that only three bodies were retrieved on the day of the incident. Efforts to locate the remaining individuals continued the following day - October 25, 2024, and two additional bodies were located by divers, but due to strong ocean currents and limited visibility, these bodies could not be retrieved at that time. The recovery of the remaining persons onboard remains a top priority for the amalgamated search, rescue and recovery team.

The NSIB is working to deploy a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to the site, equipped with advanced sensors and cameras to enhance visibility and precision in this deep-water environment. This ROV will facilitate detailed inspection, enable targeted retrieval operations, and assist in gathering vital evidence that will support our investigation into the incident.

Captain Alex Badeh Jr., Director General of the NSIB, addressed the ongoing commitment of the Bureau to the recovery and investigation: “The NSIB, alongside our partners, is fully committed to locating and recovering all individuals and critical components from this unfortunate accident. Our team is working tirelessly to manage the challenging conditions. We remain committed to a thorough investigation that will provide clear answers for the families, loved ones, and the nation.”

The NSIB’s investigation is progressing with support from a joint team of government agencies and private partners. We urge the public to refrain from speculation, which can hinder and distract from the investigation and recovery efforts. Updates on the progress of recovery operations and investigative findings will be provided as soon as verified information becomes available.

The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau remains steadfast in promoting transparency and accountability through its independent investigation process, reinforcing its commitment to enhancing transportation safety in Nigeria.

Mrs Bimbo Olawumi Oladeji
Director, Public Affairs and Family Assistance,
Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau

###

About NSIB: The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau is the multimodal transport agency charged with the mandate of promoting transport safety and conducting objective, thorough, and accurate investigations into transport accidents and incidents in Nigeria with the aim of identifying the probable causes and advocating for safety improvements based on our findings.

For further enquiries or media requests, please contact NSIB through info@nsib.gov.ng and NSIB_Nigeria on its social media platforms. The Bureau can also be reached on its emergency line +234-807-709-0909.