

MEDIA RELEASE

PNG ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATION ON HELICOPTER ACCIDENT AT JIWAKA PROVINCE

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Mr. Hubert Namani today announced that the AIC commenced an investigation into a helicopter accident occurred on 15 May 2021 at Gobo, Jiwaka Province.

Mr. Namani explained that *"on 15 May 2021 at about 11:30 am, a MIL MI8 helicopter registered P2-MHM, owned by Captston Aviation PTE Ltd. and operated by Hevilift Aviation Ltd., took-off from Gobo, Jiwaka Province, in a cargo flight to Mount Hagen, Western Highlands Province.*

"Reportedly, after vertical take-off to hover, there was a low rotor RPM indication, causing the flight crew to bring the helicopter back to the ground. Upon contact with the ground, there would have been a loss of control of the helicopter, which subsequently rolled over, impacting its tail boom and main rotor blades with the ground. The helicopter came to rest in the upside-down position."

There were four persons on board the aircraft, two flight crew, one flight engineer and one load master. Reportedly, one of the occupants suffered minor injuries and the rest resulted uninjured. The helicopter was destroyed as a result of the forces of impact in the context of the accident.

Mr. Namani explained that: *"The AIC became aware of the accident less than one hour after it occurred and immediately commenced an investigation under the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as amended) and aligned with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. As part of AIC initial investigation activities, a team of investigators has been dispatched to the accident site to perform on-site technical examinations and information gathering. Further stages of the investigation will include the collection of evidence and analysis of information in areas related to flight operations, human performance, aircraft maintenance, environmental conditions, organisational aspects and other areas, to the extent relevant for the improvement of aviation safety."*

Investigation of accidents and serious incidents with the sole objective of improving aviation safety is an international obligation for PNG as a State contracting to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. The Convention, its Annexes and the guidance of the International Civil Aviation Organization set the International Standards that the AIC, on behalf of PNG, should meet or exceed when conducting an aviation safety investigation.

The AIC as a State agency with complete independence from other State authorities including CASA PNG, aviation service providers including National Airport Corporation (NAC) and Niusky Pacific Limited (formerly PNG Air Services Limited) and aviation stakeholders. The Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as amended) mandates the AIC to conduct investigations with the sole purpose of improving safety in the aviation system and without apportioning blame or liability.

More information about the AIC and this investigation can be found on www.aic.gov.pg