



04/2024
09 February 2024

MEDIA RELEASE

RELEASE OF FINAL REPORT ON A BK117 D-2 HELICOPTER ACCIDENT AT TARI HOSPITAL HELIPAD, HELA PROVINCE

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Ms. Maryanne J. Wal, today published the *Final Report* on the investigation conducted into an Airbus Helicopters MBB-BK117 D-2 accident that occurred at Tari Hospital Helipad, Hela Province.



Ms. Wal explained; “On 1 December 2022, at about 15:17 local (05:17 UTC¹) an Airbus Helicopters MBB-BK117 D-2, registered P2-PHA, owned by Javelin Aviation Ltd and operated by Pacific Helicopters was conducting a VFR² medical evacuation (Medivac) flight from Fogomaio village, Southern Highlands Province to Tari Hospital, Hela Province, when during landing, a foreign object debris (FOD) was ingested by the helicopter’s fenestron and caused substantial damage. *There were seven (7) persons onboard: the pilot in command (PIC), Co-pilot, Load Master and four (4) passengers. No injuries were reported.*

The AIC was notified by Pacific Helicopters of the accident on 3 December 2022 at 23:20 via email, The AIC immediately commenced the investigation in accordance with its mandate under the Civil Aviation Act 2000 and pursuant to ICAO Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.”

The *Final Report* stated that as the helicopter was about 10-15 ft above the helipad, the helicopter’s rotor downwash blew up a piece of denim material into the air and into the fenestron, jamming the blades and as a result, the ten rotor blades snapped.

The investigation found that a recent excavation work around the helipad uncovered FOD on the ground adjacent to the helipad. The dirt laden denim material could not be detected from the air by the flight crew during the approach, due to its size and stained colour of grime. Additionally, the recently excavated area had not been inspected prior to the flight to ensure it was clear of FOD.

Therefore, the flight crew observed on approach to land that the area appeared free of obstacles and subsequently decided to continue to the helipad rather than divert to Tari Airport.

The Final Report of the investigation is available on AIC’s website www.aic.gov.pg

¹ The 24-hour clock, in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), is used in this report to describe the local time as specific events occurred. Local time in the area of the serious incident, Papua New Guinea (Pacific/Port Moresby Time) is UTC +10 hours.

² Visual Flight Rules: Those rules as prescribed by national authority for visual flight, with corresponding relaxed requirements for flight instruments (Source: The Cambridge Aerospace Dictionary)