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MEDIA RELEASE

RELEASE OF PRELIMINARY REPORT ON A BELL 222U HELICOPTER ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DELEGATED TO PNG BY SOLOMON ISLANDS

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) today announced the public release of the Preliminary Report for accident investigation, *AIC 26-1003*.

It is the policy of the AIC to publicly release a preliminary investigation report for each accident or serious incident being investigated within 30 days of the date of the occurrence, pursuant to the requirements of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

On 17 April 2026, at 15:28 Solomon Islands local time (04:28 UTC), a Bell 222U helicopter, registered H4-HSA, owned and operated by Helicopter Support Limited, was conducting a VFR humanitarian charter flight from Munda International Airport, Western Province, Solomon Islands, to island communities south of Munda. Shortly after departure from Munda International Airport, at about 15:33 local time, the helicopter experienced a left engine failure. The pilot turned to track back towards Munda, however, due to degraded aircraft performance, he executed an emergency landing about 2.5 nm south of Munda International Airport.

There were two persons on board the helicopter: the pilot and the Loadmaster. There were no reported injuries.

On 18 April 2026, the investigation was delegated in full to PNGAIC by the Solomon Islands, as the State of Occurrence, under ICAO Annex 13, Chapter 5, Standard 5.1, to conduct the investigation, including the issuance of the Final Report and the Accident/Incident Data Reporting (ADREP) information.

The delegation was also facilitated through the existing MoU between PNG AIC and the Civil Aviation Authority of Solomon Islands (CAASI), signed on 27 September 2025, concerning cooperation and assistance in the field of aircraft accident and in support of the ICAO's "No Country Left Behind" initiative.

The investigation that is continuing will include but not be limited to, the operational systems, performance, and maintenance aspects of the occurrence. The investigation analysis and findings will be included in the Final Report.

In accordance with its legal mandate and ICAO Annex 13 requirements, all AIC investigations are conducted solely for the purpose of improving safety for the travelling public, with complete independence from State authorities, aviation service providers, and other stakeholders. AIC investigations do not apportion blame or liability to any person or Organisation.

More information about this investigation can be found on AIC's website: www.aic.gov.pg

Authorised for release by:

Maryanne J. Wal
Chief Commissioner