

INTERIM STATEMENT

The information provided herein is of an interim nature. Readers are advised that new information may become available that may alter this interim statement prior to the publication of the final report.

1. The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), Accident and Incident Investigation Division (AIID) are conducting a safety investigation into a Cessna 182 aircraft accident, with registration markings ZS-PHB. The accident occurred on 27 August 2016 at the Komati Gorge private airstrip, Mpumalanga Province
2. The investigation is being conducted in accordance with international protocol set out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in Annex 13.
3. **History of flight**
 - 3.1 On Friday the 26 August 2016, the pilot who was the owner of the aircraft was accompanied by a passenger and they took off from Nelspruit aerodrome at approximately 1430Z. The aircraft was refuelled to capacity in Nelspruit and their intention was to fly to Komati Gorge Lodge located 24km North East of Carolina. The aircraft landed at Komati Gorge Lodge at approximately 1515Z that afternoon.
 - 3.2 After spending the night at the Lodge, on Saturday morning, 27 August 2016 at approximately 1015Z, the pilot accompanied by two passengers intended to fly the aircraft on a private scenic flight over Komati Gorge Lodge Nature Reserve. The General Manager of the Lodge, requested the flight so as to have an aerial view of the property. The intention was to fly a short scenic flight in the area and land back at the Komati Gorge Lodge airstrip.
 - 3.3 According to witness #1, *"a guest booked in at the Lodge"*, he saw the aircraft from approximately 850m away just after take-off. He estimated the height of the aircraft at that point to be approximately 30 feet above the ground (AGL). He was standing on the bank of the Komati River. The witness confirmed that he could hear the sound of the engine running, however it sounded to him as though the engine was straining. His observation was that the aircraft was experiencing difficulty or struggling to maintain height. Thereafter the aircraft rolled to the right and he heard a loud bang shortly afterwards, this was followed by a thick cloud of smoke rising. Though he did not actually see the aircraft impact the ground, he assumed that it was involved in an accident. He then immediately rushed to the scene to provide assistance. When he arrived on scene he found the three occupants inside the aircraft. The aircraft was consumed by a post-impact fire.
 - 3.4 The pilot and two passengers were fatally injured in the accident. The aircraft was destroyed by impact and a post impact fire.
 - 3.5 The pilot held a valid licence which was issued on 29 June 2012 with an expiry date of 28

June 2022 and his medical certificate expiring on 30 July 2016.

- 3.6 The aircraft had its last MPI on 07 March 2016 and was released back to service on the same day by an approved AMO.
- 3.7 The post-mortem report identified the cause of death as, "Multiple Blunt Force Injuries".
- 3.8 The weather report from South African Weather Services (SAWS) at the nearest observer station [Ermelo-(FAEO)] concluded the following:

- a. Wind: 230⁰ at 04 knots (kt)
- b. Temperature: 23⁰C
- c. Dew Point: -4⁰C
- d. Pressure Altitude: 1030hPa
- e. Visibility: CAVOK

- 3.9 The accident occurred at 1225 Local Time, in during the day with no significant weather reported in the area. The accident site was located at GPS position 25°54'20.85"S 30°16'10.57"E with an elevation of 4708ft AMSL. The aircraft impacted the ground 360m from the end of the runway.

4. The findings identified during the investigation process

- 4.1 The Pilot was appropriately licensed in accordance with the regulations.
- 4.2 The aircraft documentation required by the regulator to be carried on board the aircraft was reviewed and found to be valid at the time of the accident.
- 4.3 The aircraft had no defects recorded prior to the accident flight.
- 4.4 The aircraft had sufficient fuel for the intended flight.
- 4.5 The location of the accident site was a rock-covered hill, at the GPS co-ordinates of S25° 54'20.85" E030° 16.633 and at an elevation of 4708ft AMSL.
- 4.6 All three occupants on board the aircraft were fatally injured in the accident.
- 4.7 The weather had no bearing on the accident.

5. The following safety recommendation has been issued by the SACAA.

- 5.1 None at this stage of the investigation.

- 6. The SACAA investigation is on-going and will be looking into other aspects of this accident which may have safety implications.

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