

# South Africans, international journalist in Cameroon air crash

Among the passengers on Flight 507 were MTN Cameroon chief executive Campbell Utton, chief financial officer Sarah Stewart, Patrick Njamfa, Patrice Enam. Stewart's husband, Adam James, was also on the flight as was Nairobi-based Associated Press correspondent Anthony Mitchell.



DOUALA – The wreckage of a Kenya Airways jetliner that crashed was found late Sunday in a dense mangrove forest about 20km from Cameroon's commercial capital, aviation officials said. At the time of posting this item, there was no information on survivors from the 114 on board.

According to a press release by the airline, the aircraft was on its planned flight path.

Dozens of rescue workers and journalists searching through the swamp reached the edge of the crash site last night but did not immediately find survivors. Reporters said they had found only small, scattered pieces of wreckage before they had to abandon the search due to bad light and deep water. Teams said they would resume the search at first light this morning and follow the debris trail in hopes of finding the main part of the wreckage.

Titus Naikuni, Kenya Airways chief executive, said he had no news about the plane's condition or about the 114 people who were on board.

"We have no confirmed information about survivors or any possible casualties," he told journalists.

The cause of the crash remains unclear.

The wreckage was difficult to spot because it was hidden by a thick canopy of trees, Naikuni said.

The Nairobi-bound Boeing 737-800 left Douala airport early Saturday, an hour late because of rain, with 105 passengers and nine crew members on board. A distress call was received between 11 and 13 minutes after takeoff, and contact with

the aircraft was lost immediately thereafter, officials said.

## **Weather hampers search**

Heavy rains have hampered the search-and-rescue effort and also shrouded smoke from the wreck.

Among the passengers on Flight 507 was Nairobi-based Associated Press correspondent Anthony Mitchell. He was on assignment in the region and was one of five Britons on a passenger list released yesterday by Kenya Airways.

Other passengers include executives from the South African cell phone giant MTN.

Chevron SA confirmed that two of its employees were on board. "They are Gordon Wright, who is a South African, and Stuart Claisse who is a British citizen," said spokesman Eddie Mkuchane.

Another South African company, ABB SA, a leading automation technology group, said two of its employees and a subcontractor were on the plane. Spokesman Chesney Bradshaw said Gerard Kanda, 55, Cornelius Hermanus van der Westhuizen, 33, and subcontractor Hans Peter Weder, 67, were on board the flight.

The cause of the crash is being investigated but one unresolved puzzle is why the plane stopped emitting signals after the initial distress call. The 737-800, only six months old, was equipped with an automatic device that should have kept up emissions for another two days.

"Why the signal is not being heard right now, we're not quite sure," Naikuni said Saturday.

Meanwhile, Kenya Airways has established passenger information centres in Douala

+237-529 6505

529 6506

529 6507

529 6509

Nairobi (+254-20-320 0353/320 0354/327 4349)

and

Johannesburg (+27-11-207 1100).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>