

MEDIA RELEASE

PNG ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION REFERS TO RECENT AIRCRAFT HIJACKING DURING A FLIGHT IN WEST NEW BRITAIN PROVINCE

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Mr. Hubert Namani made an announcement on 26th November 2019 regarding the aircraft hijacking that occurred during a flight in West New Britain.

Mr. Namani said “it came to the attention of the AIC today that during a flight from Gasmata to Kandrian, West New Britain the pilot of a Cessna 208 aircraft registered P2-BEN, activated a ‘hijack alarm’ at 10:36am and diverted from the intended destination and landed at Cape Marcus Airstrip identified as Mesilia.

“The Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) does not investigate aviation security matters such as today’s aircraft hijacking. It is a matter handled by aviation security and police enforcement bodies.”

In explaining the process Mr. Namani said, “one of the main concerns of civil aviation worldwide is related to the development and implementation of regulations, practices and procedures to protect the safety of passengers, crew, ground personnel and the general public in all matters related to safeguarding against acts of unlawful interference, and to be capable of responding rapidly to meet any increased security threat.

“The international obligations of a State (country) with respect to aviation security are contained *Annex 17* to the *Convention* and the security related aspects of *Annex 9 (Facilitation)*. These Annexes set out a range of *Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS)* designed to safeguard against an act of unlawful interference with international civil aviation.

“Papua New Guinea, as a signatory State to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* has developed, implemented and continuously improved the security-related *SARPS of PNG aviation*.”

The Aviation Security Branch of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of PNG (CASA) is responsible for maintaining oversight of aviation security within the PNG civil aviation system. The Branch ensures that regulated industry participants conduct operations in compliance with their regulatory obligations under the *Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as amended)*, and relevant *Civil Aviation Rules*, and *ICAO SARPs*.

The work of the Aviation Security Branch of CASA is to ensure that any security risk that may impact on the civil aviation system is clearly identified and properly managed; recognising that the correct development and implementation of security plans plays an important role in the achievement of aviation security outcomes.

CASA PNG acts as the coordinating agency for aviation security, liaising with other Government agencies such as the Police, PNG Defence Force, the Border Development Authority, Customs, Immigration and Department of Agriculture to avoid duplication and gaps in security screening.

Mr. Namani said, “while the requirements of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* relate to international aircraft operations, the Government of PNG applies similar measures to domestic civil aviation, as far as practicable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk.

Mr Namani added, “although the AIC is not responsible for the investigation of aviation security matters, including unlawful interference with an aircraft, the AIC as one of the key PNG Government bodies actively involved in improving safety in the aviation system through accident and serious incident investigation, repudiates and deeply regrets this occurrence.”



Hubert Namani, LLB
Chief Commissioner