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Parts of Crashed Plane Found in Waters off Dominica Coast

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ROSEAU, DOMINICA, CMC — Rescue teams have found wreckage of the single engine aircraft that crashed into the sea on leaving the Douglas Charles Airport, north east of here, on Sunday night, but have so far been unsuccessful in locating the bodies of any of the four people who were on board the ill-fated flight.

Local fishermen, who are assisting in the rescue operations, showed reporters the landing gear of the Piper F-OGKO aircraft that was carrying the four unidentified people, including the two pilots, when it plunged into the sea at around 6.43 pm (local time) on Sunday evening.

Earlier, the chief executive officer of the Dominica Air and Sea Ports Authority (DASPA), Benoit Bardouille, speaking on the state-owned DBS radio, said a bag and a passport had been found and

that the rescue teams had intensified their search in the waters in Marigot.

“Four souls are on that aircraft. What we are doing earnestly is to try to see how we can find the aircraft and the four souls that were on board. We are hopeful that’s of something ...since the aircraft may not have gone too far away from the airport.

“But certainly, we are very concerned and we are doing everything along with the police as well as the French authorities to try to see how we can do any rescue or retrieval of anything that would provide the kind of evidence required for an investigation”,.

Earlier reports had indicated that the plane had crashed on its approach to the airport, but Bardouille told listeners the French-registered small Piper aircraft “was given clearance to take off from Douglas Charles Airport destined to Raizet Airport in Guadeloupe”.

Bardouille said the air controllers had lost contact with the aircraft soon after take-off and the pilot had failed to make contact with local and French air traffic controllers as required after the plane had passed 1,500 feet in the climb.

French authorities had earlier reported that the aircraft had carried persons to Dominica for a day long visit organised by the “Ailes de Guadeloupe” club and that the weather conditions were excellent at the time of the incident.

Bardouille said that the ECCAA and the French authorities are going to conduct investigations into the crash and urged persons to stop spreading false information on the matter.