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Search For Missing Aircraft Called Off, Dominica Police Say

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Landing gear of missing aircraft found b rescue teams on Monday By. CMC

ROSEAU, Dominica, CMC – Dominica Police Commissioner Daniel Carbon Friday said the “search has been called off” for a single engine aircraft that plunged into the sea soon after take-off from the Douglas Charles Airport last Sunday evening.

Carbon told a news conference here that while the police had been able to recover ‘some debris’ they were not successful in recovering any of the bodies on board the ill-fated Piper F-OGKO aircraft that was carrying the four unidentified people, as well as the two pilots.

“Our investigations continue into that missing plane. The police have recovered some debris, but we have not recovered any bodies,” Carbon said, adding “the search has been called off”.

Carbon provided no further details during the news conference on the incident, but earlier this week, French authorities in a statement said that a 16-year-old, his 55 year-old parents and a 40-year-old were also on the ill-fated flight.

On Monday, local fishermen, who are assisting in the rescue operations, showed reporters the landing gear of the aircraft that fell into the sea soon after take-off Sunday evening.

The chief executive officer of the Dominica Air and Sea Ports Authority (DASPA), Benoit Bardouille, speaking on the state-owned DBS radio, soon after the crash, said a bag and a passport had been found and that the rescue teams had intensified their search in the waters in Marigot, north east of here.

“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,” he said then.

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 Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA) and the French authorities would be conducting investigations into the crash and urged persons to stop spreading false information on the matter.