

Brazil Finds Bodies from Air France Jet While Waiting for French Submarines

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The Brazilian Air Force announced this Saturday night, June 6, that it had found two male bodies amid the debris of the Air France jet that disappeared Sunday night on its way from Rio to Paris. The bodies were transferred to the frigate *Constituição* and were being taken to the Brazilian mainland.

"The bodies were transferred to the frigate *Constituição*, which at this time is bound to the Fernando de Noronha's archipelago so that these bodies can be screened there and then sent to Recife", said Air Force colonel, Henry Munhoz during a press conference.

"Besides the two bodies, aircraft wreckage was also found. Amid the debris there were plane seats as well as parts of the wings among several other items located along the day," added the official.

The identification of bodies will be made by Federal Police experts as well as the Coroner's Office in Recife, capital of the northeastern state of Pernambuco. Brazilian authorities have also found a handbag containing an Air France boarding pass for a flight 447 passenger.

Colonel Jorge Amaral, Air Force's Communication deputy head, informed that the findings started about 8 in the morning.

"Today, we had positive results, which brings us the certainty that our work was carried out well," said Amaral. According to him, the body of the first man was found 69.5 km (43.2 miles) from the point where the jet had its last communication, about 900 km (560 miles) from Fernando de Noronha.

The most important, now, according to the colonel, is to provide comfort to the victims' families: "It's sad news, but it will bring them some comfort."

The search for wreckage should continue now together with the effort to recover bodies. The work should be a little easier, according to the Air Force, because there are no rocks or crags in that area.

The Federal police has started to collect saliva and hair samples from relatives of the victims. The work is being done in a room of the Windsor Hotel in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro.

It seems that Flight 447 crashed in international waters. The jet had passengers from 32 countries on board, including 61 French citizens, 58 Brazilians, 26 Germans and two Americans. France leads the investigation because the plane was registered there, but Brazil is deeply involved in the rescue operation, due to the number of Brazilians aboard and also the crash's site proximity of Brazil's coast.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board is sending experts to help the investigation. The engines from the crashed plane were manufactured by GE Aviation, a subsidiary of U.S.-based General Electric.

French Submarine

While France announced Friday it was sending a nuclear submarine to help find the flight data recorders of the Air France plane, which this week disappeared over the Atlantic, a press report in the Spanish press involving an Iberia plane on the same route but flying ten minutes behind could shed light into what really happened.

Airbus has reissued guidelines to pilots after experts said the plane may have had false speed measurements. A spokesman for the company said that a notice had been sent reminding Airbus crews worldwide what to do when speed indicators give conflicting read-outs.

Spokesman Justin Dubon said the readings meant that "the air speed of the aircraft was unclear". He said that in such circumstances, flight crews should - if necessary - level off the plane and start troubleshooting procedures as detailed in operating manuals.

In Madrid, the daily ABC published that Iberia flight 6024 took off from Rio seven minutes behind the fatidic 447 of Air France, traveling on the same route, but on approaching a heavy storm area moved 60 kilometers (37 miles) to avoid the turbulence.

According to ABC, the crews of the Spanish and French airlines met at the Rio do Janeiro and chatted before leaving for Madrid and Paris.

The Spanish crew also reported they heard the desperate calls from the Brazilian air controllers trying to contact the French plane, and so did they, but with no replies. The Iberia plane did not receive any emergency calls either.

Meteorologists say Flight 447 entered an unusual storm with 160km/h (100 miles/h) updrafts that sucked water up from the ocean. As the moisture reached the plane's high altitude it quickly froze in -40 C (-40 F as well) temperatures. The updrafts would also have created dangerous turbulence, they say.

The Airbus A330 jet vanished over the Atlantic en-route from Rio de Janeiro to Paris on Monday with 228 people on board.

A small group of relatives of those on board the plane has gone to the northeastern Brazilian city of Recife where the rescue operation is based. They are to be given a chance to tour the facility and to ask questions.

As the search continued on Friday, it was revealed that a wooden pallet and a fuel slick in the vicinity of the plane's last known position were not from the jet.

Brazilian air force official Brig Ramon Borges Cardoso contradicted earlier reports, saying "no material from the plane has been recovered".

The slick was most likely from a passing ship, he said.

In addition to the nuclear submarine, a French ship equipped with two deep-sea research mini-submarines is on its way to the area.

The mini-submarines will be looking for the plane's flight data recorders, which are believed to be sitting on the ocean floor up to 6.000 meters underwater.

Three more Brazilian boats are expected to arrive in the area in the next few days.

In another development on Friday, the Paris prosecutor's office opened a manslaughter investigation into the air crash. It is a routine step taken by authorities in connection with the deaths of French citizens overseas.

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