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**A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT ON BELL UH-1H-II (HUEY) HELICOPTER KAF 1501
CRASH AT SINDAR VILLAGE, KABEN SUB LOCATION, KABEN LOCATION, TOT
DIVISION, ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY ON 18 APRIL 2024**

HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

1. On 18 April 2024, the then Chief of the Defence Forces (CDF), the late Gen Francis O. Ogolla, visited troops under Operation Maliza Uhalifu (OMU) in the North Rift Counties of Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet and West Pokot. He departed Nairobi Wilson Airport on board Bell UH-1H-II (Huey) Helicopter KAF 1501. The crew refuelled at Chesit. They then briefed for the next flight to Kainuk and Chesogon.
2. The Crew and passengers on board were as below:
 - a. General Francis Ogolla - Chief of the Defence Forces (CDF)
 - b. Brigadier Swale Saidi - Commander Combat Engineers Brigade
 - c. Colonel Kasaine Ole Kuruta (**Survivor**) – Staff Officer Defence Headquarters (DHQ)
 - d. Colonel Duncan Keittany - Colonel Operations DHQ
 - e. Lieutenant Colonel David Sawe – Staff Officer Infrastructure, DHQ
 - f. Major George Benson Magondu - Pilot
 - g. Captain Sora Mohamed - Pilot
 - h. Captain Hillary Litali – Aide-de-Camp to CDF
 - i. Senior Sergeant John Kinyua Mureithi - Flight Technician
 - j. Sergeant Cliphonce Omondi - CDF Security
 - k. Sergeant Rose Nyawira - CDF Media
 - l. Cpl Frankford Karanja Mogire (**Survivor**) – CDF Media

3. In Kainuk, the helicopter was again refuelled and departed for Cheptulel Boys High School in Chesogon. The Helicopter landed at Cheptulel Boys High School at 1336 hrs. After inspecting construction works at the school, the then CDF and his entourage took off for Defence Forces Recruits Training School, Eldoret.

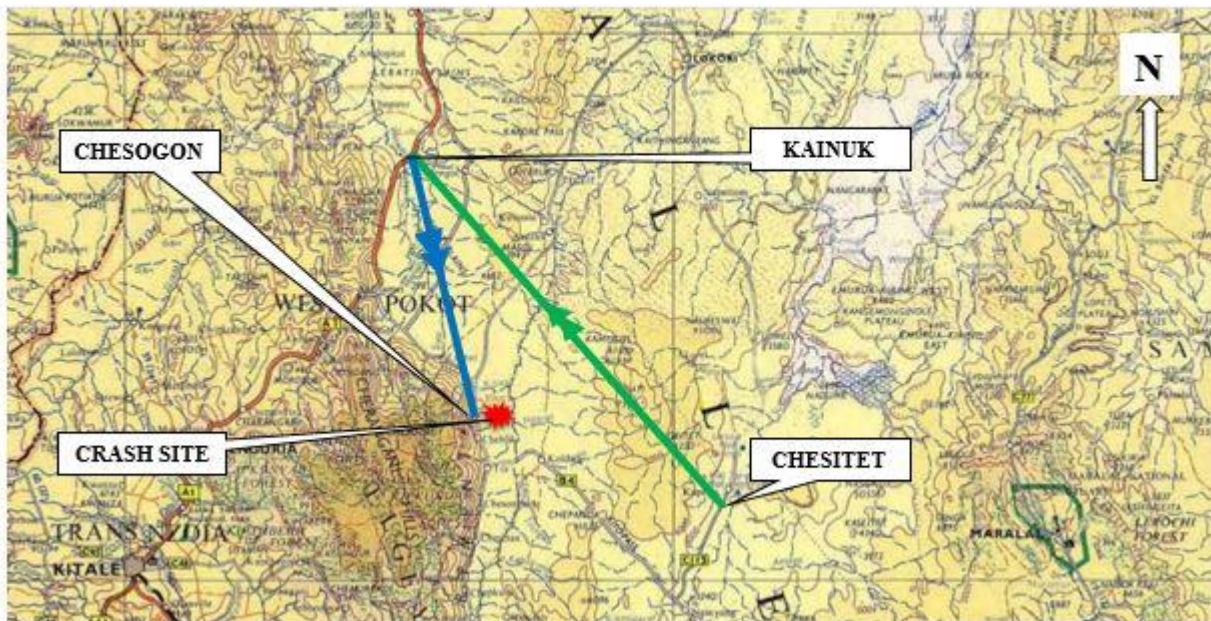
FLIGHT PATH



LEGEND

- Nairobi Wilson Airport - Chesogon (152 nm)
- Chesogon - Kainuk (57.6 nm)
- Kainuk - Chesogon (34.8 nm)
- ★ Crash Site

FLIGHT PATH



4. At around 1420hrs the Huey KAF 1501; shortly after departure from Cheptulel Boys High School, crashed on a community farm, ‘Shamba la Amani’, and caught fire on impact. The crash at Grid N 01° 17’ 49” E 035° 38’ 21”, 1.3 Nautical Miles East of Cheptulel Boys High School. Area residents together with KDF Personnel from the close by Samu Forward Operating Base (FOB), evacuated the passengers on board and extinguished the fire. Four (4) survivors of the crash were airlifted by Hughes MD 500 Helicopters to Endo Health Centre. Regrettably, two (2) among them succumbed to their injuries and the other two (2) were later on air lifted to Eldoret Regional Hospital (ERH). The ten (10) bodies were later flown to Nairobi.
5. The Helicopter suffered Category Five (Cat 5) Damage (Beyond Economic Repair).



HUEY HELICOPTER BACKGROUND

6. Kenya Air Force (KAF) acquired Eight (8) Bell UH-1H-II (Huey) Helicopters in 2016 from USA. Since then, the Helicopters have been extensively used on duties pertaining to operational missions and peacetime roles and variedly tasked to ferry personnel, logistical supplies and fire extinguishing among other assignments in the Kenya Defence Forces. On maintenance, Huey KAF 1501 underwent a Calendar-based 24 months and 300 hrs inspections between June 2021 and October 2023. During the two (2) major inspections, no major defects were diagnosed. The the helicopter underwent other scheduled servicing such as twenty-five (25) hours inspection on 14 December 2023. An overhauled engine was installed on 12 December 2023. Additionally, the

helicopter underwent fifty (50) hours inspection on 9 January 2024, seventy-five (75) hours inspection on 29 January 2024 and One hundred (100) hours inspection on 11 February 2024, twenty-five (25) hrs inspection, on 22 February 2024 one hundred and fifty (150) hrs inspection on 17 March 2024 respectively. The last Scheduled Servicing was twenty-five (25) hours which was conducted from 2 to 5 April 2024 and the Helicopter was left with 19 flight hours to the next One hundred (100) hours scheduled servicing.

FINDINGS

7. The Civil Aviation Act, cap 394, exempts State aircraft from the application of the said Act except where expressly included or if the Cabinet Secretary responsible for matters relating to civil aviation directs by an order published in the Gazette, that any part of the Act or Regulations thereunder apply to state aircraft or any class or classes of state aircraft. State aircraft are defined in the Act as aircraft used in military, customs and police services of Kenya or of any other State or any other civil registered aircraft at the time performing a state function and fully converted to offer services to Heads of States, military service, customs or police or to any other State Officer.

8. Subsequently, pursuant to Defence Forces Standing Orders (DEFSO), First Edition, 2015, Chapter 13, Section 1, Para 3, a BOI was constituted on 18 April 2024 to investigate the circumstances under which Bell UH-1H-II (Huey) Helicopter KAF 1501 crashed. The Board interviewed a total of twelve (12) witnesses, including three (3) eye witnesses and two (2) survivors.

9. The BOI considered the following in its investigations:

a. Aircrew Aspect. This included assessment of history of Flying Training, as well as Flying Experience, for both the Captain and the Co-Pilot at the time of the crash. The Captain started his Ab-Initio Pilot Training at Kenya Air Force Flying Training School (KAF FTS) before proceeding to Starlite International Aviation Academy in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) from 2 April 2016 to 2 April 2017. He had a total of 1,731.40 hrs. The Co-Pilot on the other hand joined Starlite International Aviation Academy for Ab-Initio Pilot Training on 18 February 2019 and successfully completed on 17 January 2020. At the time of the crash, he had accumulated a total of 955.45 hrs. Both Pilots were mission ready in accordance with Flying Order Book (FOB), Squadron Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Categorization, Instrument Rating and Annual Aircrew Medicals. The BOI concluded that the crew had sufficient flying hours to be considered above average Captain and Co-pilot respectively. **Aircrew aspect was therefore a less likely contributing factor.**

b. Technical Aspect. This covered maintenance training for the technicians, history of serviceability of the ill-fated helicopter, including scheduled and unscheduled maintenance and post-crash cockpit indications. The Fuel, 90° Gearbox Oil and Hydraulic Fluid samples recovered from the Huey KAF 1501 wreckage were subjected to laboratory tests and the results found to be within normal ranges. The physical Main Transmission

(Gearbox), Mast Assembly, 42° Gearbox and Tail Rotor 90° Gearbox were examined by Bell Helicopter Textron, USA and the components revealed no evidence of seizure or fractured gear teeth. However, the engine was found to have experienced high temperatures as proven by the measured gas temperatures (MGT) gauge, which when powered displayed an over-exceedance of 914 °C. Regarding Technician Training, the BOI established that sufficient maintenance training was offered to Huey Technicians at Bell Helicopter Training Academy, Fortworth, Texas, USA. The Technician was therefore considered to be adequately trained to manage the flight.

c. **Mission Planning and Execution.** The Captain received the task to convey the CDF to OMU at 1528 hrs on 17 April 2024. The Crew had sufficient time to prepare and plan for the mission. The following morning, Huey KAF 1501 had been prepared and certified as airworthy after successful completion of Before Flight (BF) Checks by 1st Line Personnel. The Crew then signed the necessary paperwork, performed the requisite checks and departed Moi Air Base (MAB) for Nairobi Wilson Airport at 0711 hrs. The Helicopter then departed Nairobi Wilson Airport at 0915 hrs with twelve (12) Souls on Board (SOB) which was within the carrying capacity of thirteen (13), with personal luggage. At the time of the crash, the Helicopter had the same number of passengers that were on board from Nairobi Wilson Airport. It had also consumed some fuel since the last refuelling in Kainuk. **Weight was therefore a less likely contributing factor.**

d. **Weather.** Huey KAF 1501 was flying from Cheptulel Boys High School, Chesogon, to DFRTS, Eldoret. The crew executed the take-off successfully under Visual Flight Rules (VFR). The weather in the general area of the crash site was reported as Scattered Clouds, Easterly Winds, with Temperature of 25 °C. This weather is deemed favourable for Air Operations. **The weather was therefore a less likely contributing factor.**

e. **Character, Crew Cooperation and Coordination.** The Captain was a very experienced and competent Pilot. He was jovial and very interactive with colleagues. The Co-Pilot on the other hand was a slightly reserved individual who communicated well when required. This was a good crew combination. **Crew coordination was less likely to be a contributing factor.**

f. **Communication.** Huey KAF 1501 departed Nairobi Wilson Airport for Chesitet. The aircraft then flew to Chesogon via Kainuk. The crew were in constant two-way communication with other relevant stations. **Communication was less likely to be a contributing factor.**

g. **Engine.** The Helicopter suffered Engine Compressor Stall (Surge) which is consistent with witness report of a loud bang at the Engine compartment and the Measured Gas Temperature (MGT) gauge, which when powered, displayed an Over-Exceedance of 914 °C. The Helicopter then experienced a Complete Power Loss which was followed by

a left yaw, drop in Engine RPM, low RPM audio alarm and change in engine noise, as narrated by witnesses on the ground and accident scene reconstruction.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

10. The Huey Helicopter KAF 1501 was assessed to have had a relatively high level of reliability, having conducted several operational and training missions, including VIP flights. Further the flight was operated by qualified competent crew.

11. However, dependent on information from the survivors, after experiencing Complete Power Loss, the Pilots of KAF 1501 attempted to control the Helicopter to a clear Landing Zone but lost positive control of the aircraft.

12. Based on facts and evidence gathered, and indicated in the findings above, the **Board of Inquiry is of the opinion that the Bell UH-1H-II (Huey) Helicopter KAF 1501 crashed due to Engine Malfunction.**

13. Consequently, in accordance with the recommendations of the BOI, Kenya Air Force has updated and reviewed its Standard Operating Procedures to avert future occurrence.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE