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[Ugnet] Obama's mercenary soldiers survive plane crash in Uganda

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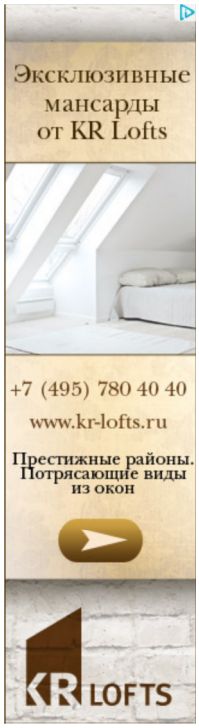

In Summary

On board were a Major, two Captains, one Warrant Officer and three Europeans. The aircraft, the second to crash in the West Nile region in two years, came down about 6kms to DRC. All passengers, except two, miraculously escaped unhurt.

Two of about a dozen survivors of yesterday's plane crash in Arua have been discharged from Arua Hospital as questions last night whirled about the airworthiness of the aged Antonov An-2 plane.

Dr Alex Alidria, who handled the patients at the casualty unit, said they sustained "soft tissue injuries". Their wounds were stitched and the pair got discharged immediately, he said.

No one died in the 2pm mishap even when the twirling plane crash-landed on two huts, before bursting into flames minutes later. The tense lapse between ground impact and the fire outbreak enabled the 11 or so occupants and crew to quickly evacuate, witnesses said. "I saw the plane hovering at low level, said eyewitness Stephen Edema, "Then I heard a bang."

Aviation and security officials, citing probable midair mechanical failure, said the military carrier, loaded with food stuff and beverages, failed to gain altitude on takeoff from Arua Airfield.

The unnamed pilot and his co-pilot, Pascal Akon, tried but failed to manoeuvre the World War II-era plane for safe landing back at Arua airfield. It was en-route to Nzara, a remote airfield in South Sudan, near DR Congo and Central African Republic, where UPDF and US Special Forces are hunting down LRA rebels.

Residents, excited and terrified simultaneously, scattered but regrouped shortly to catch a glimpse of the strangers who emerged from the broken fuselage. The villagers, however, took to their heels again when the plane exploded into flames with a din. "God is great," one of the military survivors said.
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The ill-fated plane, reportedly owned by an Isreali national, was being operated by Ukrainians contracted by the US government to airlift UPDF troops and supplies to operational bases in CAR. It emerged last night that the plane was also carrying cash for operations, but the money was saved before the aircraft caught fire."There is no information that any American citizen was on board the plane," said Mr Daniel Travis, the public affairs officer at the US Mission in Kampala.

UPDF Airforce spokesman Kiconco Tabaro said: "It is not a UPDF Airforce aircraft and I am not in position to comment on an asset that doesn't belong to us."

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