

Bloomberg

Last update: 09:47 AM ET, May 12

Libya Plane Crashes in Tripoli With 104 on Board

By Alaa Shahine and Franz Wild - May 12



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At least 96 people were killed in the Afriqiyah Airways flight crash in Libya. Photographer: Mahmud Turkia/AFP/Getty Images

An [Airbus SAS](#) jetliner operated by Libya's [Afriqiyah Airways](#) crashed while attempting to land in Tripoli, killing at least 96 of the 104 people on board.

The twin-engine A330 plane "crash-landed in the final approach" after the flight from Johannesburg, airline spokeswoman Elizabeth McQuiggan said by telephone. The "black box" data recorders have been found, Libya's official JANA news agency said, citing Transportation Minister Mohamed Zeidan.

Among the 93 passengers were 62 Dutch tourists, of whom one, a child, survived, according to Markus van Tol, a spokesman for the ANWB Royal Dutch Tourist Association. The flight was also carrying 11 crew, Afriqiyah said on its [website](#).

The wide-body aircraft, which was powered by engines from [General Electric Co.](#), made its first flight on Aug. 12 last year and was delivered new to the Libyan carrier on Sept. 8, according to U.K. aviation consultants Ascend Worldwide Ltd. [Airbus](#) said it will provide "full technical assistance" to the authorities investigating the accident.

"Preliminary reports indicate that the aircraft crashed short of the runway threshold during approach," the Toulouse, France-based planemaker said in a statement.

Metal parts from Afriqiyah Flight 771 were strewn on the ground at the site of the crash, television footage showed. Rescue workers could be seen wearing masks and searching for survivors in the wreckage.

Casualties have been taken to various hospitals and the Libyan authorities plan to issue a statement on their condition, Afriqiyah said, without elaborating.

All-Airbus Fleet

The Tripoli-based carrier, which was founded in 2001 and serves destinations in Africa, Asia and Europe, had an 11-strong Airbus fleet prior to the crash, including two more A330s, Ascend safety director [Paul Hayes](#) said by e-mail.

Dutch travel operator Kras.nl, part of TUI Travel Plc, said on its website that it had customers on the plane, and the ANWB's von Tol said some passengers would have continued to Brussels and Dusseldorf, Germany.

"It is a very sad report on this day," Dutch Prime Minister [Jan Peter Balkenende](#) told journalists in The Hague.

The Dutch foreign ministry said a boy survived the crash and is being treated for fractures in a hospital in Tripoli.

Afriqiyah's route network also includes London's Gatwick airport and the [British Foreign Office](#) said it's investigating reports that a number of British nationals were on the plane.

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