



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT**

**Directorate of Aircraft Accident and Incident  
Investigations**

**Accident Reference: ACCID/07172023/01-06**

**Aircraft Accident Investigation Interim  
Report**

**Robinson R44 Raven II: ZS-HLG**

---

**RELEASE DATE: 17 JULY 2024**

---

## Introduction

In view of the sustained interest within the aviation industry, and amongst the travelling public, it is considered appropriate to publish an update on the continuing investigation into this accident. This report is in addition to the Preliminary Accident Report, that was released on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2023.

The information contained in this Interim Report is published to inform the aviation Industry and the public of the general circumstances of the accident that occurred on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2023 at Swakopmund Airfield.

In accordance with policies of the Directorate of Aircraft Accident and Incident investigations (DAAIL) which is in-line with ICAO's Annex 13 to the Convention of International Civil Aviation, the sole objective of the investigation is to determine the probable cause of the accident and to make safety recommendations intended to prevent reoccurrence.

It is not the purpose of this activity to apportion blame or liability.

*Note: Readers are cautioned that there is the possibility that new information may become available that alters this Interim Report prior to the availability of the Final Accident Report.*



Figure 1: The Robinson 44 Raven II Helicopter ZS-HLG, accident aircraft (source: Flight Zone)

ZS-HLG      Robinson R44 II      11517 (S/N)

## FACTUAL INFORMATION

### History of the flight

On Monday afternoon, 17 July 2023, at around 13:35 UTC (15:35 Local Time) a Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter with registration ZS-HLG departed from Swakopmund Airfield (FYSM) to perform a maintenance test flight. The purpose of the flight was to conduct final rotor balancing and to execute auto-rotations. Onboard the helicopter was the pilot and a maintenance engineer.

The accident flight was the last test flight (after two other test flights) which required rotor balancing and to execute auto-rotations. During the auto-rotation one of the main rotor blades hit the tailboom causing it to detach from the main fuselage. Witnesses heard a loud bang and saw the helicopter spiraling down to the ground.

The helicopter impacted the ground on the left side at a high velocity. The tailboom was found 158 meters away from the wreckage. The resultant accident was not survivable.

Eyewitnesses, the local Flying school crew and the AMO crew rushed to the crash site. The Police, the Ambulance and the Swakopmund Municipal Fire Brigade were called to scene. The pilot and the maintenance engineer on-board were fatally injured.

The Directorate of Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation (DAAII) was informed of the accident at 14:00 UTC (16: 00 Local time) of a Robinson Helicopter that crashed east of Swakopmund Airfield. The DAAII appointed an Investigator-in- charge and a Co-investigator to lead the investigation and issue the final report. The investigators commenced with the investigation immediately.

The State of the aircraft manufacture and the State of registry was notified of the accident.



*Figure 2: Picture showing where the helicopter crashed.*

### **Damage to Aircraft**

The helicopter was destroyed.



*Figure 3: Picture showing the destroyed Helicopter as it came to rest.*

## Personnel Information

The pilot was a 54-year-old Namibian citizen and the holder of a valid Namibian Helicopter License issued according to the Namibian Civil Aviation Regulation (2001) part 61.01.10. His R44 endorsement was valid until 07/12/2023. The pilot had a total of 10958,7 hours flying experience. He logged 181.9 hours on helicopters, of which 84,7 hours were on the R44 helicopter type.


The pilot had a valid class 1 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 10 February 2023 with an expiry date of 28 February 2024.

## Analysis and Findings

The analysis and findings will be discussed in detail in the final report.

## Conclusion

The Interim Accident Report has been made available as an update on the progress of this investigation. The investigation is complete and the **Final Draft Report** has been sent to the relevant stakeholders for comments. The stakeholders include the State of the aircraft manufacture, the State of registry and all parties who participated in the investigation. Once all comments are received and considered, the **Final Report** will be released to the public.

  
Ben C. A. Engelbrecht  
**Investigator-in-charge**

Date: 17 July 2024

  
.....  
Magnus Abraham  
**DIRECTOR: AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS**

Date: 17 July 2024

