



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

**Directorate of Aircraft Accident and Incident
Investigations**

Accident Investigation Preliminary Report

RELEASE DATE: 12TH NOVEMBER 2025

Accident Preliminary Report

DESCRIPTION OF OCCURRENCE: Loss of Control (LOC-I).
TYPE OF OPERATION: Aerial Survey/Observation (Game Count).
AIRCRAFT TYPE: Robinson R44 Helicopter
LOCATION: Farm Uris, Mountainous Terrain (S19° 16' 13.81" E17° 32' 31.17")
DATE AND TIME: 17 October 2025, 08:15 Local Time

Introduction

The information contained in this Preliminary Occurrence Report is published to inform the Minister responsible for Aviation and the public of the general circumstances of the accident that occurred on 17 October 2025.

The purpose of the Directorate of Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigations (DAAII) is to promote aviation safety through the conduct of independent investigations without prejudice to any judicial or administrative authority consistent with provisions of the Namibian Civil Aviation Act, Act 6, of 2016. This is in line with provisions of ICAO's Annex 13 paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2.

Note: The information provided herein is of a preliminary nature. Readers are cautioned that there is the possibility that new information may become available that alters this Preliminary Report prior to the availability of the Final Report.

Aircraft Registration: V5-HIG
Aircraft Type: Robinson R44 Helicopter
Operator: Namibia Helicopter Services
Type of Operation: Aerial Survey/Observation (Game Count)
Date & Time of Occurrence: 17 October 2025, 08:15 Local Time
Location: Farm Uris, Mountainous Terrain (S19° 16' 13.81" E17° 32' 31.17")

Purpose of the Investigations:

In terms of the Namibian Civil Aviation Act (Act No. 6 of 2016) and ICAO Annex 13, this report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of risk of aviation accidents or incidents and **not to establish blame or legal liability.**

History of the flight

On the 17th of October 2025, a Robinson R44 helicopter, with registration V5-HIG, departed Otjiwarongo at approximately 06:35 local time for a routine aerial game count survey over Farm Uris. On board was the Pilot-In-Command and three game observers. Conditions were reported as clear, though windy and gusty conditions were expected in the mountainous operating area.

The flight proceeded into a tight mountain valley. While counting Elands, the pilot's attention was momentarily diverted, leading to an uncommanded descent and reduction in airspeed. The aircraft simultaneously entered a severe downdraft likely created by the adjacent mountain ridges. The combination of low speed, low level, and the downdraft resulted in a rapid, unarrestable descent rate, exceeding the available power margin.

The pilot identified an open clearing on the sloped terrain for an emergency landing. During the final approach, the main rotor blades struck a high-density tree to the right of the aircraft. The impact caused the helicopter to pitch and roll left, sliding down the slope, and rolling onto its side, resulting in the catastrophic destruction of the drivetrain and airframe.

All four occupants successfully evacuated the wreck with minor injuries..

1.2 Injuries to Persons

Injuries	Pilot	Crew	Passengers	Other
Fatal	- Nil -	- Nil -	- Nil -	- Nil -
Serious	- Nil -	- Nil -	- Nil -	- Nil -
Minor	1	- Nil -	3	- Nil -

1.3 Damage to Aircraft

The aircraft sustained Substantial Damage, resulting in a total loss. Damage includes main rotor blades destroyed, fuselage deformed, and the aircraft rolled onto its side.



Photo 1. The helicopter rolled onto its left side after impacting the trees.



Photo 2 : Depicting the damage to the under carriage

1.4 Personnel Information

Detail	Pilot-In-Command (PIC)
License:	Commercial Pilot License (0275000968)
Total Flight Time:	1332.2 hours
Hours in Type (R44):	558.2 hours

1.5 Aircraft Information

Detail	Data
Aircraft Type:	Robinson R44 Helicopter
Maximum Certified Mass:	1136.36 kg
Airframe Hours (approx):	1715.0 hours
Manadatory Periodic Inspection	23 rd Septemebr 2025

1.6 Meteorological Information

Departure Base (Otjiwarongo): Temperature 22°C, clear skies, light winds reported.

Accident Site: Gusty winds and severe downdrafts were reported in the mountain valley.

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES.

Collection and analysis of a range of standard information for an accident investigation of this nature are ongoing.

FINDINGS

Although the investigation is ongoing, the following findings have been made:

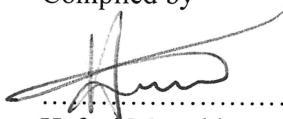
The helicopter was operating a game count survey in a mountainous valley.

The pilot's license was valid, he held a Commercial Pilot License and a Class 1 medical Certificate. His last proficiency check was done on 11/06/2025. The pilot had relevant ratings for the aircraft type issued by the South African Civil Aviation Authority and validated by the Namibian Civil Aviation Authority, issued a month before the accident (19th September 2025).

The aircraft had a valid certificate of Airworthiness issued on 14th March 2025.

The attempted emergency landing resulted in the main rotor blades striking a tree, leading to catastrophic damage to the rotor system and the subsequent roll-over. The aircraft sustained substantial damage.

Compiled by


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Hafeni Mweshixwa
Investigator in Charge
DAAII

Date: 12th NOV 2025

Released by:


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Philippine Lundama
Acting Director: DAAII

Date: 12 November 2025

