Beat: Miscellaneous

Rescue workers spot wreckage of small plane on Indonesian mountain

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USPA News - Indonesian rescue workers on Thursday morning spotted the wreckage of a small plane on a mountain in eastern Indonesia, police and local media said, but severe weather in the area is preventing a rescue mission until at least Friday. The PAC-750 aircraft had taken off from Sentani Airport in Jayapura, the capital of Papua province on the island of New Guinea, and went missing shortly after a stop at a small airport in the Korupun subdistrict of Yahukimo Regency.

It was scheduled to land in neighboring Dekai subdistrict at around 11:15 a.m. local time on Wednesday. The aircraft was carrying two missionaries, identified as pilot Christian Yus and passenger Paulus Osu, from the Tariku Aviation Ministries Foundation. On board the small airplane were basic supplies and logistics equipment, and both missionaries are believed to be living in the area. A search-and-rescue plane located the downed aircraft at a mountain in the region on Thursday, and reports suggest the wreckage is located at an altitude of approximately 8,000 feet (2,440 meters). Photos taken from the search plane showed most of the airplane appears intact, but one side appeared to be destroyed. Tariku Aviation Ministries Foundation program manager Robinhood Ratuntiga told the Antara news agency that a signal was sent from the crash site to the aircraft`s manufacturer in New Zealand, but gave no other details. Police said they were unsure about the conditions of those on board, but Ratuntiga said there is a "high possibility" that at least the pilot is still alive. Severe weather prevented a rescue team from reaching the site on Thursday, but a team of 20 rescue workers is on standby to immediately go to the scene if the weather improves on Friday. "We`re hoping there will be miracle from God," Ratuntiga told the Indonesian news agency.

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