

## **Miracle : Baby survives South Sudan plane crash in man's arm**

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**Juba:** A thirteen-month-old baby and a man who was found cradling the infant were the only survivors of a cargo plane that crashed soon after taking off from a South Sudan airport, killing 37 people, a witness and relatives said on Friday.

Stephen Warikozi, who heads South Sudan's Civil Aviation Authority, said the plane was not authorised to carry passengers. He told The Associated Press that the captain of the Antonov AN-12 informed the control tower at Juba International Airport before taking off Wednesday that he had 12 passengers and six crew members. There were believed to be even more people aboard the flight than those cited by the captain.

Achol Deng, a presenter for the South Sudanese State television who was among the first on the scene of the wreckage, said she found the surviving infant near the wreckage lying on the chest of an unconscious man also injured in the crash. Deng said she and others helped bring the baby to a hospital for care.

"It was like an intervention by God," Deng said. After he regained consciousness the man, who suffered severe injuries to his head, arms, and legs, said he used his body to shield the infant, Deng said. The infant, named Nyalou, survived with a broken leg and a wound to her forehead. Her mother and older sister perished, according to the father, Thong Deng, who flew to Juba from his home in Paloich after hearing of the incident.

Warikozi said the plane's cargo capacity was 15.5 tons and that, according to the cargo manifest, the plane was carrying its maximum capacity for cargo. The plane crashed near the Nile River soon after taking off. It had been bound for the Paloich oil fields.

Minister of Transportation Kuong Danhier Gatluak said the known death toll is now 37, up from 36. He said no more bodies were found at the site yet and attributed the change to a recount of the bodies and body parts at the hospital where they were brought.

The UN mission in South Sudan said it has provided a diving team to search the River Nile adjacent to the crash site and an engineering team to support efforts to cut open or remove debris. The Soviet-made Antonov plane, which had been bound for the Paloich oil fields in Upper Nile state, was registered in Tajikistan and belonged to Allied Services Limited, said Ateny Wek Ateny, a spokesman for South Sudanese President Salva Kiir.

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