



Tuesday, 23 April 2024

Media Statement
For Immediate Release

Safety of flight crew and passengers a top priority for ATNS

On Sunday, April 21, 2024, an aircraft departing from OR Tambo International Airport (ORTIA) en route to Cape Town International Airport experienced a loss of its rear tyre, making it impossible to continue its flight.

Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) SOC Limited's mandate is to provide gate-to-gate Air Traffic Services, which includes managing air traffic within the South African airspace, the oceanic and the Atlantic Flight Information Regions, by using the communications, navigation, and surveillance system.

During the incident, ATNS Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs) on duty, including personnel from the entity's Central Airspace Management Unit, which is responsible for air traffic flow, safely rerouted the aircraft to its original point of departure, which was ORTIA.

An incident of this nature is rare in the South African aviation space, and the safe landing of this aircraft indicates ATNS's preparedness to uphold all aviation safety protocols, especially in the event of a flight emergency. It also indicates the level of collaboration between ATCs, pilots, airport ground crew, and aviation weather specialists within the aviation value chain.

"Every day, tens of thousands of aircraft take to the skies across the globe, safely delivering millions of passengers to their destinations. South Africa is no exception. ATNS Air Traffic Controllers are thoroughly trained for any situation, including managing the movement of aircraft in our airspace during adverse weather conditions, on-board medical distress of passengers and flight crew, as well as a scenario as experienced on Sunday," says ATNS CEO, Ms. Nozipho Mdawe.

Ms. Mdawe congratulated all the ATCs on duty during the incident, specifically referring to their "unmatched dedication and deep commitment to keeping the South African airspace safe".

"As Air Traffic Controllers, you are usually working behind the scenes, yet you are the ears and eyes of the flying public. Keep up the good work!" concluded Ms. Mdawe.

Ends.

Issued by the Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) SOC Ltd
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