FRENCH INVESTIGATORS CONFIRM REUNION FLAPERON FROM MH370

News / Airlines

French officials have confirmed that the piece of aircraft wreckage discovered on Reunion Island is from the missing Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200, MH370.

In a statement issued by the official French investigator, the flaperon was identified as being one which had been manufactured by Airbus for the aircraft registered as 9M-MRO. It was operating flight MH370 when it went missing March 8, 2014, shortly after taking off from Kuala Lumpur on a scheduled flight for Beijing.

There were 239 passengers onboard. No emergency calls were made and data from indicates the aircraft steered far west and south of its planned route, ending in the South Indian Ocean.

The flaperon, found washed up on the French island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean in July, was the first physical evidence found from the aircraft. No other debris has been found. It was taken to Toulouse, France, for inspection by aircraft experts.

"It is therefore possible to confirm with certainty that the flaperon found on Réunion island on 29 July

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corresponds to the one from flight MH370," the French investigating prosecutor said.

The aircraft wreckage was identified by a sequence of part numbers still discernable on the structure, despite being in the sea for 15 months. The announcement confirms a statement made last month by Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak that the wreckage was from MH370, based on airline paint and maintenance records.

Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) chief commissioner Martin Dolan, added the confirmation of the wreckage's origin would not change Australia's search plans for MH370, as they had already been working on the assumption that the flaperon was associated with MH370.

"All we [definitely] know is that the flaperon at some point became detached from the aircraft and there are a range of possible scenarios from that," Dolan said.

Australia has led and coordinated the extensive international search effort for MH370.

07 SEPTEMBER 2015

SOURCE: ATW
ARTICLE LINK:
https://50skyshades.com/index.php/news/airlines/french-investigators-confirm-reunion-flaperon-from-mh370

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