



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CIVIL AVIATION,
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATEMENT BY THE HON. CARLOS JAMES, MINISTER OF CIVIL
AVIATION, SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ON THE
BELLANCA-17 AIRCRAFT CRASH**

KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, January 04, 2024: At 12:09 pm local time on January 4, 2024, a Bellanca 17 single-engine aircraft with registration N4023B, owned and operated by a resident of Bequia, Robert Sachs, was involved in a fatal accident shortly after takeoff from the J.F Mitchell Airport, Bequia.

The aircraft was enroute to the Hewanorra International Airport, St. Lucia, and was carrying a total of four individuals, including the pilot and three passengers.

Shortly after takeoff, the pilot declared an emergency and subsequently crashed into the water. Regrettably, there were no survivors.

Local divers, along with the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Coast Guard, retrieved the bodies from the aircraft wreckage.

We regrettably inform that passengers, Christian Klepser, a 51-year-old citizen of the United States of America and his daughters: 13-year-old; Annik Klepser and 11-year-old; Madita Klepser were involved in the fatal crash. They arrived in the State on the 26th of December 2023.

Relatives of the deceased were informed of the accident through the Embassy of the United States of America.

The Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA) is currently investigating the accident.

We continue to work closely with the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority and other relevant authorities as we await the preliminary findings, which will help determine the probable cause of the accident.

Further details will be disseminated to the public following the conclusion of the investigation conducted by the ECCAA.

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