

PRESS RELEASE

SAHARA GROUP'S POSITION ON ATK SALES

Over the past week, SAHARA GROUP'S attention has been drawn to articles in the print media, on the internet and on social media implying that Sahara Group may be involved in selling sub-standard Jet fuel and insinuations that one of our companies, So Aviation Fuel Limited, has had a part to play in PAST AND RECENT AIR ACCIDENTS IN THE COUNTRY.

These allegations and insinuations are too grave in nature to go unchallenged. Therefore, the onus is on us as responsible citizens and stakeholders to set out the facts before the public and our customers.

The accusations imply that So Aviation's fueling of the ill-fated Dana Airlines flight on the 3rd of June 2011, the Nigerian Air Force helicopter in which General Andrew Azazi lost his life on the 16th of December 2012 and the recent Bristow Helicopter crash in Lagos on the 12th August 2015 were caused or contributed to by contaminated fuel supplied by So Aviation Fuel Limited.

Even though it has not been alleged, we will also state our position on two other unfortunate air accidents, the Associated Airlines accident of 3rd October, 2013 and the NAF 030 Dornier aircraft that crashed in Kaduna on the 29th of August 2015.

For the record, Sahara Group will like to state the following:

1. So Aviation DID NOT fuel the Dana flight on the day of the crash. The aircraft was fueled by another Marketer on that day.
2. So Aviation DID NOT fuel the NAF helicopter that crashed in Okoroba Village, Bayelsa State that had General Andrew Azazi and H.E. Patrick Yakowa on board.
3. So Aviation carried out a bulk Jet fuel delivery via a bowser-to-bowser transfer to Bristow Helicopters. Bristow then subsequently fueled at least 10 of their helicopters on that same day. NONE of the aircraft fueled by Bristow on that day with the fuel supplied had any fuel related trouble on the day of the accident.
4. So Aviation DID NOT fuel the Associated Airlines that crashed at MMA carrying the remains of H.E. Olusegun Agagu.
5. So Aviation DID NOT fuel the NAF Dornier aircraft that crashed in Kaduna last month.
6. It is pertinent to state that though So Aviation is emphatic in asserting that it DID NOT fuel these aircraft, this should not be misconstrued in any guise to imply that the Marketers who supplied the fuel are responsible or contributed in any way to these unfortunate accidents. IT WOULD BE TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO MAKE SUCH A DEDUCTION.
7. The Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) of Nigeria carried out a comprehensive and detailed report on the Dana crash in which it stated that "preliminary analysis of fuel samples from the refueling truck and the supply tank at ABV were negative for contamination".

8. A statement attributed to Mr. Tunji Oketunmbi, Head Public affairs of AIB, was reported by the press on the 4th of September 2015 as saying "Anytime we are doing an accident investigation, part of the routine exercise is to take fuel and present for analysis. I don't think we have seen any accident that was caused by fuel up till now".
9. So Aviation is the only indigenous West African company that has ever fuelled the American President's Air Force One Jet. Our client base includes the Presidential Air Fleet, 27 international airlines, 9 domestic Nigerian airlines, 3 International Oil Companies, numerous private jet operators and Cargo Airlines.

At no time has any of our clients EVER complained about the quality of fuel or the quality of the service provided.

10. So Aviation is ISO 14001:2004, OHSAS 18001:2007 and ISO 9002:2008 certified and has some of the highest quality standards, safety control protocols and safety technology in aviation fuel handling in the country and the whole of Africa. This has been attested to and verified by Bureau Veritas.
11. So Aviation's fleet of bowzers used for fueling International airlines, DO NOT have filters that utilize Super Absorbent Polymers. The bowzers are all fitted with a new technology, JET GUARD that monitors the fuel being delivered to an aircraft in real time for contaminants. The bowser pumps automatically stop fueling if any contaminants are detected. In addition, the electronic differential pressure transducer fitted across the bowser filters gives a clear indication of the condition of the filters.
12. The NNPC and the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) approved quality specifications for DUAL PURPOSE KEROSENE (DPK) are some of the most STRINGENT in the world, even exceeding the internationally accepted specification for Jet A1.

Due to its very low flash point - designed to prevent explosions in homes - DPK specification ensures that it is safe to use as household kerosene for cooking. Hence the name "Dual Purpose Kerosene".

13. All imported Jet A1/ATK is inspected by DPR before being allowed into the Country. Any cargo that fails quality testing is rejected. The product is also tested in the tanks at the discharge port, during transportation and also in the feeder tanks at airports across the Country. All our stock of Jet fuel is tested daily by our quality control laboratory and samples drawn are kept for several months after testing.
14. At regular intervals, IATA through the IATA Fuel Quality Pool (IFQP), Qatar Airways, Emirates, Air France, Delta, United, Bristow Helicopters, Arik, Aero, Air Peace, Dana, Lufthansa, DHL and the DPR have all carried out satisfactory audit checks on the quality, processes and procedures at So Aviation's depots.

It is important to state that these unjustifiable allegations and insinuations are an affront to the integrity and professionalism of all the regulatory bodies involved in ensuring the safety of air travel in the country.

Some of these bodies include: the DPR, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the International Air Transport Association, the Federal Ministry of Aviation and the Nigerian Aircraft and Accident Investigation Bureau.

Such insinuations are tantamount to implying sheer incompetence and a lack of professionalism on the part of the above mentioned agencies in the light of the spurious allegations linking jet fuel to several air accidents within a short period.

In our experience, these agencies are professional and highly effective in carrying out their duties and obligations in ensuring safety standards are rigorously adhered to and have in some instances even been termed overzealous in performing their duties.

Since inception, So Aviation has focused on the procurement of quality Aviation fuel and optimum customer service delivery with the goal of guaranteeing customer satisfaction. These core values have earned the company its reputation as a reliable and customer-focused Marketer in the industry.

The Sahara Family lost very close associates, friends and relatives in the Dana, Associated Airlines and NAF helicopter accidents and the scars and pain are still fresh and deep.

It is extremely insensitive and disrespectful to the memories of the deceased and the grieving families who lost loved ones in these unfortunate incidents for reckless rumors to be circulated on the likely cause of the accidents.

Finally, we pray that the Nigerian public will not be swayed into believing rumors that are not substantiated by hard, credible facts and will continue to travel in full knowledge that the Country's air travel regulators give their safety the highest priority.

Signed

Management