

Africa Update 2

This past Sunday, a Congolese airline took off loaded with passengers. During take-off, a crucial piece of equipment fell off of the plane. The airplane was forced to circle the larger airport to burn off fuel and for emergency personnel to gather in preparation for upon their landing. By the grace of God, there were only a few very minor injuries, although it is unlikely the airplane will ever fly again.

From a near tragedy, one could expect their local government to step forward in an effort to decrease the likelihood of this happening again by making certain that the other airliners are keeping up with protocols. Unfortunately, this isn't quite how it works. During the many previous "inspections," the official will visit and walk around the airplanes asking questions about things that do not exist, and then fine us heavily for not meeting their standards (think "blinker fluid" being low, or not having a cockpit partition that doesn't exist for our aircraft). In the past, we have tried to mentor these officials to help them understand the importance of their job and how to do it better, but no one has shown any interest in changing. In the end, they no longer send people to inspect the planes, but now just send bills that said they came and inspected, but never did.

We have been blessed with an incredible program and deputy manager. They have been working hard to build bridges between our organization and the local officials. While they have been doing a phenomenal job, this recent incident is going to make things more difficult on them. Pray that we will be able to use this accident to help advance aviation safety. Pray that the officials will not use this opportunity for personal gain, and instead take a step forward in trying to prevent more accidents. Pray that we can continue to be good stewards of our aircraft and always strive to improve and fly safer. Finally, pray for wisdom for our team when officials stop by to "inspect and regulate".