



PRESS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR COMMEMORATING AIR CRASH VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Harare, Zimbabwe | Friday, 20 February 2026 | Today marks the fifth anniversary of "**International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and Their Families**", a day of remembrance, a call for compassion and a commitment to safer skies, for beyond every aviation crash is more than an incident report, there is a story interrupted, a family forever affected and a community left grieving.

The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development and Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe (CAAZ), being Zimbabwe Aeronautical Authority and Civil Aviation Regulatory Authority, respectively, honor and remember the lives lost in air crashes across the globe and extend deepest condolences to families and loved ones who continue to carry the burden of this unimaginable pain and loss while reaffirming an unwavering commitment to Safe and Secure sustainable Civil Aviation operations.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council established the **International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families** in 2022, in support of a proposal made by the Air Crash Victims' Families' Federation International (ACVFFI). During the fifth meeting of its 224th Session, the ICAO Council designated 20 February of each year as the **International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families**. Its aim is to provide Governments and the Aviation Industry with a gentle reminder of the obligation upon them to improve the care, resources and timely support and provision of comprehensive information that accident victims and their loved ones need following such tragic events.

ICAO has progressively developed comprehensive support frameworks for Victim Assistance since the introduction of provisions in Annex 13 in 1976. Over the years, Family Assistance has been elevated from a Recommended Practice to Standards under ICAO Annex 9, making it mandatory for ICAO Member States to establish proper enabling Civil Aviation Policies.

ICAO also provides dedicated Capacity- Building Programs, including the implementation Packages (iPack) which help Member States to implement effective support systems. In addition, ICAO encourages Member States to ratify the Montréal Convention of 1999 to ensure harmonized liability and compensation while promoting training, awareness and integration of family assistance protocols into Civil Aviation operations. As the ACVFFI emphasized during the 2025 Facilitation Conference, "Families who may be affected in the future deserve better than what we have experienced in the past. The time is now". These efforts reflect ICAO's commitment not only to Safety, but to compassion and continuous improvements for all those affected by air tragedies.

The Republic of Zimbabwe through its Aeronautical and Civil Aviation Regulatory Authorities prioritises Civil Aviation development, ensuring a conducive and robust Civil Aviation Policy environment for Safe and Secure Air Transport Development in line with the Convention on International Navigation obligations.

In support of the National Civil Aviation Policy guidance, CAAZ is implementing the ICAO State Safety Program (SSP) which entails a comprehensive National Civil Aviation Safety Framework.

ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), and in particular Goal 3, calls on all ICAO Member States to implement an effective State Safety Program as a foundational element of their national aviation safety frameworks. Zimbabwe has made significant progress toward this objective, with the development of a SSP Implementation Plan that provides a clear roadmap for strengthening Safety Oversight and Regulatory Compliance.



Figure 1. Air Traffic Control Personnel monitoring runway activity from the Control Tower at the R.G.M.I Airport