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Crash Affectees Group



PRESS RELEASE

Nov 13, 2010

Why was this organization created?

- a. To help ourselves in the absence of any kind of moral, social, civil or legal support from the government agencies and AirBlue.
- b. To benefit from the official guidelines extended to crash victims as per law without hindrance influence, coercion, or threats.
- c. Ensure safer skies to all fellow Pakistani Air travelers by assisting in enforcing the laws prevalent internationally, with regards to passenger safety n rights.
- d. Become a vital part of the chain of air related issues in Pakistan wherever consumer privileges / rights are concerned so that passenger benefits are voiced at all government levels.

First time in Pakistan:

It has been the norm in Pakistan that all air crash tragedies are thought as Allah's Will and brushed under the carpet with no lessons learnt for future preventions as far as human error / oversight / negligence is concerned.

We want the civil society, media and all concerned citizens to mobilize and stand up for their rights in finding the truth about what happened on that day. What corrective actions are being taken and what lessons are being learnt.

Who helped us?

Common Pakistanis, normal ordinary people helped in the search and rescue, at the hospital, at the airports, at courier service counters, at hotels and everywhere..

What segments of society we are representing?

Aircrash victim's families which are ommon Pakistanis irrespective of their religious, political or socio-economic background. We have no political or hidden agenda.

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What has happened so far?

Government:

- a. Nothing from the government side that we know off.
- b. An investigation team was set up by the government under CAA, which has completely failed in coming up with any concrete findings upto now.
- c. Complete disorganization from the very start of the crash handling.
- d. Due to untrained handlers of the crash site, investigation and vital evidence has been lost forever.
- e. Till to-date, not a single family member has been asked to give their statement in any form of investigation.
- f. More than 100 days have passed and no briefing has been given to us.

Non Government:

Many civil society groups (HelpLine Trust, Shehri, Transparency International, ACVFG-USA) etc are supporting our call of a just and impartial inquiry into the crash.

Government Department's Role so far:

- a. CAA, Ministry of Defense, NDMA, Civil Administration of Islamabad, Commissioner, PIMS, Police, Insurance companies etc – Zero performance in helping, coordinating with the effected families.
- b. Never in the history of Pakistan, any CAA report has been made public
- c. The international norm (S.O.P) is that nothing is touched without forensics etc being present
- d. Our Minister Mr. Ahmed Mukhtar confirmed that the plane is being reconstructed; Where is it being done & why we haven't been informed
- e. No importance was given to any material belongings of the victims
- f. Human remains handled with desecration
- g. Recent JS Air crash – when will we learn?
- h. Are we waiting for another major disaster?

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AirBlue obligations not carried out:

- a. ICAO Circular # 285-AN/166 "GUIDANCE ON ASSISTANCE TO AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES" – violated by AirBlue
- b. Vide Chapter 3, para 3.17, the operator is expected to facilitate in formation of a Family Association. Besides, according to Chapter 5, para 5.7 of the circular, the aircraft operator is also expected to provide following assistance:
 1. Transportation for families and survivors.
 2. Immediate financial assistance.
 3. Stress counseling service for families and survivors.
 4. Visit to scene of accident.
 5. Memorial service and erection of memorial structures.
 6. Transportation of families for any memorial service.
 7. Collection of ante mortem information.
 8. Return of human remains.
 9. Assistance with funeral arrangements.
 10. Location, storage and return of personal effects.
 11. Provide information on issues related to care of families and survivors.
- c. No helpdesk, helpline, advert in media for logistical arrangements immediately after the crash, no personal contact by the higher-ups to affected families etc.
- d. Due to no details provided by AirBlue, the families suffered by not being able to get to know the facts. Most of the families went to Islamabad, to the crash site etc on their own arrangements and were forced to arrange finances, hotel stay-overs including greasing the palms of the some of the concerned officials to get the remains of their loved ones.
- e. Due to overall mismanagement, the families were abused, threatened, mishandled and ridiculed at all locations by the management of the respective areas, i.e, airports, PIMS, local govt offices, police, etc.
- f. In this case AirBlue not only failed to extend all the support and assistance at the time of crash but is now deliberately trying to shirk its corporate responsibility even after lapse of more than 3 months as per the ICAO Circular as mentioned above.

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What AirBlue did?

- a. First condolence appeared on Aug 08, after 10 days of the crash.
- b. The first interaction of Mr Khaqaan Abbasi with the families was in the last week of September.
- c. A lot of tall claims were made in the meeting, but the reality is that none of them materialized. If we have sent them 10 emails, only 1 has been responded.
- d. The immediate relief of Rs 550,000/- has been given to only a handful of families just to show to the media that we are the good Samaritans.
- e. The rest of the families are still running from pillar to post to get the immediate assistance.

What we have done so far:

- a. Coordinated the effected families to unite under a common platform to act as a single voice in all cases.
- b. While keeping ourselves within the bounds of the Law, we are tapping all available legal avenues.
- c. Also approached Chief Justice of Pakistan through a letter requesting a Suo Moto Notice of this calamity and order impartial and 3rd party inquiry in last week of August.
- d. Constitutional Petitions have been filed in the Sindh High Court for appointment of an appropriate investigation team under section 282 rather than under section 273, effectively making an accused, the investigator of the crash.
- e. In case, the financial assistance falls miserably short of international compensation standards in similar cases, we reserve the right for further legal action to safeguard the monetary viability of the effected families.

What we want:

- a. The AirCrash Victims Families do not face similar problems in future.
- b. Legislation in accordance with ICAO Document 285 for Assistance to Families of Air Crash Victims
- c. Legislation for establishment of Independent Air Accident investigation organization.
- d. Pakistan government to endorse the Montreal convention which is still pending since last 11 years.

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- e. Provide a platform for all affected to gather, raise their concerns and share their pain
- f. To urge the government and stakeholders to clearly identify the causes of the crash in the most transparent manner
- g. To highlight the lack of coordination on the part of the authorities and air blue in terms of managing the crisis and handling the families during such a tough time
- h. To ensure that Affectees are adequately compensated as per international laws and precedents
- i. To urge the authorities to constitute an independent commission which will design standard operating procedures for dealing with any such disaster in the future
- j. To form a Benevolent Trust to continually support the families of the poor victims

Message:

- a. Justice delayed is justice denied. Justice should not only be done but it also must be implemented.
- b. We need justice in the form of truth based on ground realities irrespective of the responsibility factor. We must become mature as a nation in order to accept the truth.
- c. We reject the investigation team currently constituted by the government making CAA as in-charge.
- d. We intend taking up the matter with international regulating authorities (ICAO and EASA)
- e. We are now putting our faith in Allah Ta'alah to alleviate our sufferings through friends in the Media and other civil society organizations who think along parallel lines for disposition of justice and rule of law.

ANNEXURES:

1. Objectives and Purpose
2. Letter to the Chief Justice
3. Press Release – English
4. Press Release – Urdu
5. Passengers List
6. Conduct of AirBlue – A personal view
7. CAA advertisement for compensation
8. Judgment of Sindh High Court in favour of our basic demand of conducting a Board of Inquiry under Rule 282 and 285 by independent persons as per international conventions