

IFALPA Conference Statement on Tuninter ATR-72

Background

The delegates of the 68th Annual Conference of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Association (IFALPA) unanimously expressed their concern that the Italian Appellate Court decision upholding the jail sentence of the Captain and the First Officer of the Tuninter ATR-72 that crashed near Palermo, Italy on 6 August 2005, will adversely impact aviation safety.

The accident investigation conducted by technical experts determined that the cause of the accident was an incorrectly installed fuel gauge which in turn caused a false fuel level reading resulting in a double engine failure due to fuel exhaustion.

This accident was the result of unintentional human errors and the criminal prosecution of the pilots who were unaware of the errors is unjustified by any measure. This action has the potential to cripple our ability to learn from incidents and accidents so future mishaps can be prevented. Pilots and other aviation professionals who are directly involved in an aircraft accident are encouraged to provide accurate and complete information to investigators so the safety factors of the accident can be determined. If criminal prosecution of individuals involved in aircraft accidents continues, those involved will be reluctant to provide critical information to investigators which will adversely impact the quality of investigations and aviation safety.

IFALPA Statement

IFALPA urges the development of a worldwide ICAO standard to preclude criminal prosecutions for aircraft accidents that involve unintentional human mistakes. This is necessary to insure the continued free flow of critical information in accident investigations so safety factors can be determined and future accidents can be prevented.