

ACTIVITY: Air Disaster

CASE: GSAF 2004.01.03.a

DATE: Saturday January 3, 2004

LOCATION: The Red Sea off Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.
27°52'N, 34°22'E

NARRATIVE: Flash Airlines Flight 604 was a charter flight operated by Egyptian charter company Flash Airlines. The Boeing 737-300 crashed into the Red Sea shortly after takeoff from Sharm el-Sheikh International Airport. Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported that blood was seen in the water "because sharks have eaten some of the plane's victims" and attempts at a rescue operation were complicated by the presence of sharks.

The wreckage sank to a depth of 1,000 m (3,300 ft), making recovery of the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder difficult, but two weeks after the disaster, both devices were located by a French salvage vessel and recovered by a ROV. The findings of the crash investigation are controversial, with accident investigators from the different countries involved not agreeing on the cause.

INJURIES: All 135 passengers, most of them French tourists, and 13 crew members perished. Flight 604's death toll was the highest of any aviation accident in Egypt, and the highest of any accident involving a Boeing 737-300, but shark involvement in any of deaths was not confirmed.

SOURCES: Murdo MacLeod ,News Scotsman, January 4, 2004

<http://news.scotsman.com/egyptianaircrash/Many-children-among-dead-in.2491621.jp>

Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_Airlines_Flight_604

Ferrante, O. and Vital, J. C. (2005) Underwater Recovery at 3300 Feet. *ISASI Forum*, **38**, 14-17.

<http://www.bea.aero/etudes/sea.search.operations/sea.search.operations.pdf>



The yellow rectangle is the surface area where floating wreckage was collected by rescuers.

The red circle indicates the last known position of the aircraft given by the Sharm el-Sheikh radar.

Map from Ferrante, O. and Vital, J. C.