

'I felt like I'd been electrocuted': Sole survivor of Airbus crash relives her ordeal as she is reunited with her father

By [Mail Foreign Service](#)

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The child survivor of the Yemenia jet crash which killed 152 today spoke of her ordeal as she flew back to France for an emotional reunion with her father.

Bahia Bakari told a French government minister that she felt something 'like electricity' before the crash.

'She says instructions were given to passengers and that then she felt something like electricity ... as if she had been a bit electrocuted,' France's government minister for cooperation, Alain Joyandet, who flew back to Paris with Bahia today, said.

'And suddenly there was this big sound. She found herself in the water - and you know the rest.'



Miracle: Bahia Bakari lies in a stretcher next to her father Kassim in a plane shortly after landing at the Bourget airport outside Paris today

Bahia lost her mother in the tragedy and only survived by clinging on to debris for more than 12 hours before search teams spotted her in rough seas.

Astonishingly, the 14-year-old is barely able to swim and did not have a life jacket.

She was only told today that her mother was dead. An uncle who visited her yesterday at a Comoros hospital was too heartbroken to break the news - and told her that her mother was recovering instead.

Bahia's father, Kassim, met the plane, saying he was relieved and overjoyed to see his daughter even as he mourned his wife.



Crashed Airbus 310 pilot Khaled Hageb inside a Yemenia plane in an undated handout image from his family

'It was very powerful,' he said of his reunion with Bahia. He said he asked her, "How are you? Was the return trip OK?" ... We joked a little, the two of us.'

Joyandet praised her strength and courage.

'It's an enormous message that she sends to the world ... almost nothing is impossible,' he said. 'We will do everything we can to help her.'

'I am torn between relief and sadness. I am happy to see my daughter but her mother did not come back,' Bahia's father, Bakari Kassim, said shortly after she landed at Roissy Airport in Paris.

Bahia had been sedated for the flight and appeared groggy as she arrived back in France.



Search: Rescue workers continue to scour the sea of Comoros where the Airbus went down



Break: Rescue workers at Galawa Beach where the search operation is based

She was flown home on a French government jet from the the Indian Ocean archipelago of Comoros.

Doctors in Comoros, who marvelled at Bahia's escape with little more than cuts, bruises and a fractured collar bone, said she was discharged on her father's request.

'It was on the demand of her father in France. The girl was regaining her spirit and was in a satisfactory physical state,' Dr Jean Youssef, lead doctor at the disaster unit on Grand Comore, said.

Youssef said Moroni's El Marouf hospital lacked the facilities needed to properly scan the teenager's body for any internal damage.



Safe home: A French government carrying Miss Bakari taxis on the runway after landing at Roissy airport, Paris



Escort: Police motorcyclists accompany Miss Bakari's ambulance from the airport

Rescuers have failed to find any of the remaining 152 passengers and crew since the Yemenia Airbus A310 crashed in rough weather off Comoros in the early hours of Tuesday.

American and French military aircraft continued to scour the crash site on Thursday to locate the wreckage, thought to be in waters up to 1,600ft deep.

Rescuers suspect many of the dead remained trapped inside the doomed plane and say the search effort should focus on finding the wreck.

'Everything leads us to believe that the bodies of the victims remain inside. In two days we haven't found a body, any large pieces of debris or suitcases floating on the water,' disaster centre member Ibrahim Abdourazak said.



Survivor: Bahia Bakari lies in her hospital bed before being transported back to France. Her face has been obscured to meet French privacy laws



Relief: Bahia's father Kassim Bakari (left) with French transport minister Dominique Bussereau talks to reporters after his daughter landed in Paris

The cause of the crash is still unknown.

The French defence ministry have denied that the black box recorder, which will give vital clues to the crash, has been located despite earlier reports to the contrary.

The aircraft, which was on the final leg of a trip from Paris and Marseille, was the second Airbus to crash into the sea in a month.

The airline said there were 75 Comoran passengers on board, along with 65 French nationals, one Palestinian and one Canadian. The crew comprised of six Yemenis, two Moroccans, one Indonesian, one Ethiopian and a Filipina.

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We should give all thanks to God for this little girl who has survived this terrible ordeal. It was not her time to go. I hope she makes a speedy recovery. God bless her and her family.

- Jo, London, UK, 03/7/2009 09:38

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People should not make rash statements about the performance, construction or what they consider to be the reasons regarding Airbus aircraft, when they know absolutely nothing about the cause or reason why a specific type of aircraft has crashed. Yes, it is very unfortunate that there have been a number of Airbus aircraft crashes in the past year, but apart from the one that crashed into the Hudson River in USA where it was put down to ingestion of wildfowl or something similar, there have been very few accidents of this type of aircraft that have so far been discussed in the press until recently with the Air France & Yemenia airlines crashes.

How many Boeing aircraft of numerous types have crashed in recent years? Many indeed but little has been said about such incidents. However just because there have been 2 crashes within a short space of time, people are denouncing the Airbus aircraft.

- JEB, France, 03/7/2009 06:32

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Airbus needs to get a grip stop all the airplanes and find out what is going on .
Bahia may you live forever and ever child ,well done you are a great hero in my eyes

- Marc, London, 03/7/2009 02:29

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I'm not a Christian, Jew, Moslem, or anything else, but I believe this child's survival is truly a miracle.

- Marianne, UK, 03/7/2009 00:43

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Lucky girl, but not a wonderful end for her. She's lost her mother and will likely be burdened with survivors guilt and fear of flying.
She has a long road ahead of her, and she's incredibly lucky but life ain't gonna be easy.

- Imogen, Bath, 02/7/2009 23:04

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These Airbus planes havent been around for that long. Seems they are very unpredictable.

- Cathy, Germany, 02/7/2009 22:46

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