ASCEND AIRWAYS MAKES HISTORY WITH FIRST DIRECT FLIGHT BETWEEN UK AND SIERRA LEONE IN OVER A DECADE

News / Airlines



Ascend Airways UK has successfully operated the inaugural flight from London Gatwick to Freetown, Sierra Leone. This marks a re-establishment of direct air connectivity between the two countries after a 12-year hiatus. The historic flight took place on April 26, with the return journey from Freetown on April 27, coinciding with Sierra Leone's Independence Day. The inaugural flight carrying members of the United Kingdom's Sierra Leonean diaspora, along with other international guests, restored a vital air link. The last time the two destinations were connected with direct flights was in 2012.

Alastair Willson, CEO of Ascend Airways commented: "It is a true honour to have operated the historic London Gatwick to Freetown flight on behalf of Air Sierra Leone. It took months of hard work to set this connection up, and we are looking forward to operating this much-needed route during the summer and winter season."

Ascend Airways is a UK-registered airline, which has an Air Operator Certificate and Type B Operating License from the UK CAA. In 2023, it was acquired by Ireland-headquartered Avia Solutions Group, which operates a fleet of 221 aircraft on 6 continents. Ascend Airways will

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operate three weekly services for Air Sierra Leone commencing on June 16. This new route reconnects Sierra Leone with the UK, opening vital opportunities for tourism, business, and economic development between the two countries.



The partnership between Air Sierra Leone and the UK-registered Ascend Airways promises a high level of safety and adherence to strict regulations. All flights on this route will be operated utilizing Ascend Airways-trained cockpit and cabin crew. Ascend Airways is also responsible for all maintenance procedures of the aircraft operating the Gatwick-Freetown flights.

The inaugural flight was operated by the company’s newest Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, G-CRUX, which was added to the airline's fleet in 2025. The choice of aircraft shows the commitment Ascend Airways has to sustainable aviation, as the MAX reduces CO2 emissions by 20% and features a 40% lower noise footprint compared to previous-generation aircraft.

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