CHC HELICOPTER MAKES UNSCHEDULED LANDING ON OIL PLATFORM OFF NORWAY

News / Business aviation



A CHC-operated Sikorsky S-92 helicopter with 16 people onboard was forced to make an unscheduled landing on an oil platform off Norway on Friday, a rescue official said.

The incident comes just over a month after an Airbus H225 Super Puma helicopter operated by the same company crashed, killing all 13 people on board as the main rotor blades separated from the aircraft.

Norway's Civil Aviation Authority banned the use of the H225 in Norway after preliminary findings of an investigation showed a possible safety issue with the model's gearbox.

The Sikorsky S-92 took off from the Maersk Gallant drilling rig operated by France's Total at around 0720 GMT on Friday and had to land on the Ula platform 43 kilometres away at 0752 GMT after a cockpit indicator showed low oil pressure in its gearbox.

A spokesman at the rescue coordination centre for southern Norway said it was "a precautionary landing", with pilots notifying the centre about the need to land at 0744 GMT.

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"They have never sent a mayday signal, but you can't fly with low oil pressure. You have to land as soon as possible, and if there is no platform or deck around, you have to land on the sea," the spokesman said.

Leif Harald Halvorsen, a spokesman for Total, said Ula was the nearest installation on which the helicopter could land.

"All passengers and the crew are well and taken care of on the Ula platform," he added.

CHC Helicopter said in an emailed statement the pilots had requested a priority landing, following standard procedure after the cockpit light illuminated during the flight.

"The aircraft made an uneventful landing and will now be thoroughly inspected by our engineers before returning to service," it said.

A spokeswoman for CHC in Norway said the company was sending its technicians to the BP-operated Ula platform, but it would take time for them to arrive as no other helicopters could land on the platform and they would have to travel by sea.

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