

Teen Plane Crash survivor 'didn't feel a thing'

The father of a teenage girl who remarkably survived a plane crash off the Comoros islands has described how his daughter was ejected from the plane into the Indian Ocean.

"She didn't feel a thing. She found herself in water," Paris-based Kassim Bakari told French radio RTL after speaking to his 13-year-old daughter Bahia who was recovering Wednesday in hospital in Moroni. "She could hear people talking, but in the middle of the night she couldn't see a thing. She managed to hold on to a piece of something," said Bakari, whose wife was also on board the doomed flight and is presumed to be among the 152 victims. "She said she was ejected from the plane," Bakari said. Bahia, who lives in Marseille, escaped with just cuts to her face and a fractured collar-bone as the Yemenia Airways Airbus A310 tried to land at Moroni airport at the end of a four-stage flight from France. A local surgeon said Bahia was doing well in hospital. "Her health is not in danger. She is very calm given the shock she suffered," Ben Imani told Reuters.com at Moroni's El Marouf hospital. The girl is expected to be flown home to France on a ministerial plane, Agence France-Presse reports. Earlier Kassim Bakari told France Info, a French radio network, that his wife and daughter were flying to Comoros to visit relatives. "When I had her on the phone, I asked her what happened and she said, 'Daddy, I don't know what happened, but the plane fell into the water and I found myself in the water ... surrounded by darkness. I could not see anyone,'" Bakari said. French junior foreign minister Alain Joyandet met the girl in hospital on Wednesday and heard how she was pulled from the sea. The head of the rescue team in the Comoros also told RTL the teenager survived astonishing odds. "It is truly, truly, miraculous," said Ibrahim Abdoulazeb. "The young girl can barely swim." Another rescuer told France's Europe 1 radio the girl was spotted in the rough sea among bodies and plane debris in darkness about two hours after the crash. "We tried to throw a life buoy. She could not grab it. I had to jump in the water to get her," the rescuer said, according to AFP. "She was shaking, shaking. We put four covers on her. We gave her hot, sugary water. We simply asked her name, village." Bakari said he did not believe he would see his wife or daughter again after learning of the crash. "She is a very, very shy girl. I would never have thought she would have survived like this. I can't say that it's a miracle, I can say that it is God's will," he said.

Kassim Bakari said his daughter had been told her mother survived the crash. "When I spoke to her she was asking for her mother. They told her she was in a room next door, so as not to traumatize her. But it's not true. I don't know who is going to tell her." Former pilot and aviation analyst John Cox said the girl's discovery reminded him of the 1987 crash of Northwest Flight 255 in Detroit, Michigan, in which only a 4-year-old girl survived, while 156 others died.