

## **Aircraft accident in the Susten area - Statement by skyguide on the military investigation report**

**Geneva, 07 April 2020:** The Military Justice today published the investigation report on the F/A-18 accident in the Susten area. The report concludes that a contributing factor of the accident was an overly low altitude instruction by air traffic control.

"We deeply regret this tragic accident. Today, our thoughts are also with the relatives and friends of the pilot who lost his life. Together with the Air Force, we have taken steps to ensure that such an accident never happens again", says Alex Bristol, CEO of skyguide.

On August 29, 2016, an F/A-18 of the Swiss Air Force crashed in the Susten area. The pilot lost his life in the accident. The accident and the loss of a valued colleague have deeply moved skyguide employees.

It was made known at an early stage that skyguide bears joint responsibility for the accident. This was confirmed by the detailed report of the Military Justice published today. The report concludes that an air traffic control altitude instruction below the safe minimum height was partly responsible for the accident. Furthermore, the investigating judge states that the pilot who suffered the accident was unable to establish radar contact with the leader during the take-off phase.

Based on these findings, the military examining magistrate has requested the opening of a preliminary investigation against the air traffic controller involved and the military pilot in the leader function.

Skyguide deeply regrets that air traffic control actions contributed to the accident. Together with all those involved, we have drawn lessons from this accident to further enhance safety in military aviation.

An internal investigation conducted by skyguide immediately following the accident has identified potential for improvement in the areas of infrastructure, procedures and training. Since 2017, skyguide has identified a total of twelve improvement actions in collaboration with the Swiss Air Force, and has been gradually implementing them since then. Skyguide will be analyzing the Military Justice report in detail and examining it to further improve measures for military air navigation services.

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Skyguide provides air navigation services for Switzerland and certain adjacent parts of neighbouring countries. With its 1,500 employees at 14 locations in Switzerland, the company guides some 1.3 million civil and military flights a year safely and efficiently through Europe's busiest airspace. Skyguide is well integrated into the international air navigation services community and, with its innovative and customer-minded solutions, helps enhance Switzerland's appeal as a place to live, work and do business. The company is majority-owned by the Swiss Confederation, and is headquartered in Geneva.

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