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Ninth Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Technical Group (E/CAR/CATG/9) Meeting
Miami, United States, 28 to 31 July 2025

Agenda Item 3: Follow-up of the activities of the E/CAR/CATG
3.4 Progress report of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Committee

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) COMMITTEE
(Presented by the SAR Committee Rapporteur)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
This Working Paper summarises the activities of the Search and Rescue Committee, as related to the improvement of the Search and Rescue Services within the Eastern Caribbean Region. This paper provides a summary of the SAR Committee's work since the Eighth Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Technical Group Meeting (E/CAR/CATG/8).	
Action:	Suggested actions are presented in Section 3.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency• Security & Facilitation• Economic Development of Air Transport• Environmental Protection
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E/CAR/CATG/8 - Miami, United States, 22 to 24 October 2024• Annex 11: Air Traffic Services• Annex 12: Search and Rescue• PANS-ATM (Doc 4444): Air Traffic Management• Doc 9731: IAMSAR Manual – International Aeronautical & Maritime Search and Rescue manual

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update to the E/CAR/CATG/9 meeting on the activities of the E/CAR/CATG/SAR Committee since the E/CAR/CATG/8 meeting.

1.2 The following conclusions were included as part of the report NACC/WG/SAR/TF/5/ - Mexico City, Mexico, 23 to 27 September 2024:

- a) Conclusion “NACC/WG/SAR /TF/4/4 SUPPORT TO INTERREGIONAL SAR EXERCISE (SAREX) IN THE CAR REGION” was completed. France organized an interregional SAREX

and received support from the Secretariat and participation of relevant regional stakeholders”.

- b) Conclusion “NACC/WG/SAR/TF/03/1 SUPPORT THE UPDATE OF THE CAR/SAM ANP TO INCLUDE THE DEFINITION OF THE LIMITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SEARCH AND RESCUE REGIONS OF THE CAR REGION remains valid, no progress in the definition of the limits and responsibilities for Search and Rescue Regions (SRRs) was noted. The Secretariat will present an action plan to address this Conclusion before the NACC/WG/SAR/TF/6 meeting”.

2. Discussion

2.1 The E/CAR/CATG/SAR committee continues to work towards strategically implementing elements of the SAR system that will improve the response for aircraft in need of SAR services.

2.2 2025 SAREX within the ECAR Region

2.2.1 During the NACC/WG/SAR/TF/5 meeting, held in Mexico City, Mexico, France presented plans for the SAREX Pelican 2025 in Martinique. The exercise involved the national SAR system of Martinique, being activated following the notification of an aircraft in distress using Autonomous Distress Tracking (ADT). ADT requirements were globally implemented in 2024; and necessitate coordination amongst various aeronautical agencies once an aircraft experiences distress conditions.

2.2.2 A key aeronautical objective was to verify that Location of Aircraft in Distress (LADR) information was effectively disseminated among Airlines, ANSPs, ARCC/ARSCs. France requested the active participation of Trinidad and Tobago, as the RCC of the Piarco FIR for the success of SAREX Pelican 2025. The delegation from Trinidad and Tobago assumed the roles of Piarco Area Control Centre (Piarco ACC) as well as the Piarco RCC during the exercise.

2.2.3 The simulation was comprehensive and involved the use of simulators and ATC personnel executing coordination procedures in real-time. During the exercise, the Air Traffic Services Units of Piarco ACC and Le Lamentin Approach simulated the alerting service coordination procedures. As the simulation progressed, the coordination of LADR messages was performed among the aircraft operator, Piarco RCC and Piarco ACC. Further coordination was required between Piarco RCC and MRCC FOF.

2.2.4 SAREX Pelican 2025 provided the delegation with valuable insight into the details of SAR procedures used by SAR stakeholders and response units. The exercise extended to the deployment of the French SAR Units to retrieve objects at sea. This was well coordinated by the French Prefecture and supported by the SNA-AG Service de la Navigation Aérienne Antilles-Guyane. The SAREX also involved the use of actors from the community that recreated a realistic humanitarian disaster. The conduct of this complex, large scale exercise further demonstrates the advanced state of preparedness by the French authorities in Martinique.

2.2.5 The event highlighted the absence of LOAs in support of formal procedures between Piarco RCC and the French ARSC/MRCC. Timely resolution of these items will be essential in ensuring effective SAR readiness and compliance with ICAO Annex 12 protocols. The large-scale exercise also

provided an excellent opportunity for the delegation to witness the synergy demonstrated by the French national response agencies.

2.2.6 A significant conclusion from the first Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Technical Group table-top Search and Rescue Exercise (E/CAR/CATG/SAREX/1) was the importance of clear communication protocols and standardized SAR procedures for effective RCC coordination.

2.2.7 The committee aims to gradually expand regional SAR stakeholder involvement, with the long-term objective of conducting a large-scale table-top SAR event that includes both Aeronautical and Maritime stakeholders across the region. The 2025 Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Technical Group table-top Search and Rescue Exercise (E/CAR/CATG/SAREX/2) is planned for the last quarter of 2025.

2.3 Regional Cooperation to Resolve SAR Cases within the Piarco SRR

2.3.1 Within the Piarco Flight Information Region, there are many instances of “*overdue aircraft*” due to radio communication failure. These are mainly associated with low-flying VFR aircraft or general aviation flights traversing the oceanic portion of the Piarco FIR. In such cases, ATS Units are required to escalate the aircraft emergency phases from the point of uncertainty to the distress phase or until the aircraft is located. The declaration of aircraft emergency phases requires the use of ATS/SAR resources to conduct prompt investigations, to determine the status of the aircraft, and to coordinate with other ATS Units, aircraft operators and RCCs. Trinidad and Tobago is seeking to develop a database of general aviation operators which would require operators to provide contact information for assistance in these situations. The implementation of space-based ADS-B should also assist in locating aircraft which may be experiencing RCF.

2.3.2 Since 2023, it has been observed that several overdue and missing aircraft within the Piarco Flight Information Region were found in other regions. These cases are alleged to be security related or illicit activities. In many instances, post analysis investigations revealed that regional security entities were monitoring the activities of these aircraft. As such, there is a need for high level discussions involving the Security and SAR stakeholders to develop procedures to ensure coordination of security-sensitive information which may alleviate any unnecessary workload for RCC/RSCs.

2.3.3 ICAO Document 9985 – Air Traffic Management Security Manual describes the importance of Civil-Military coordination and the valuable contribution of Air Traffic Service Providers to Aviation Security. These cases regularly test the robustness of ATS alerting procedures including the declaration of the emergency phases and the Annex 12 coordination requirements for aeronautical RCC/RSCs. These cases have remained within the aeronautical remit and underscores the importance of Annex 12 documentation and preparedness for a possible mass causality event involving deployment of Search and Rescue Units is required.

2.3.4 The established E/CAR/CATG/SAR Committee WhatsApp group chat has proven to be a very effective coordination tool in sharing information regarding any overdue or missing aircraft.

2.4 Search and Rescue Regions within the CAR Region

2.4.1 As part of the effort to update the CAR/SAM Air Navigation Plan (ANP), the E/CAR/CATG/SAR Rapporteur requested that States within the Piarco FIR declare their Search and Rescue

Region (SRR) boundaries. Annex 12 establishes clear requirements for each State (with responsibilities for the coordination of SAR) to establish RCC/RSCs. This information is required to be published in the AIP.

2.4.2 During E/CAR/CATG/SAR committee meetings, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guadeloupe, and Martinique confirmed that their Aeronautical SRRs are coincident with their Terminal Control Areas (TMAs). As such, these TMAs are required to function as SAR Rescue Sub-Centres, (RSCs). However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada have not confirmed their position as they are consulting with their authorities. Trinidad and Tobago SRR is coincident with the Piarco FIR. The Piarco ACC functions as the Piarco Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC). The establishment and delineation of SRRs ensure that there is a clear assignment of responsibilities by States and Territories. This information is required to be formally incorporated in the CAR/SAM ANP.

3. Suggested Actions

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the information presented in this Working Paper;
- b) Urge E/CAR States/Territories/International organisations to continue working with the E/CAR/SAR committee to ensure compliance and harmonised SAR procedures within the region; and
- c) Provide other recommendations to improve SAR services in the E/CAR Region.