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Runway Excursion at Port Harcourt International Airport: Urgent Need for Strengthened Aviation Safety Oversight

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Summary:

On July 13, 2025, Air Peace Flight P47190 veered off the runway at Port Harcourt International Airport upon landing. Though no casualties were recorded, the incident triggered widespread concern over aviation safety in Nigeria, particularly due to the history of similar runway excursions at the same airport and others nationwide. This latest event reveals persistent weaknesses in Nigeria's aviation oversight, infrastructure, and emergency preparedness. While Air Peace has reaffirmed its commitment to safety, recurring incidents suggest systemic deficiencies in regulatory enforcement, runway design, maintenance, and risk management. To prevent future occurrences and reinforce public trust in domestic air travel, the National Assembly may wish to:

- **Summon the NCAA, FAAN, AIB-N, and Air Peace** for a formal hearing on the incident and broader safety issues affecting Nigerian airports;
- **Mandate ICAO-compliant Runway Safety Teams (RSTs)** at all Nigerian airports to conduct regular safety audits and proactive risk mitigation;
- **Commission** a nationwide runway infrastructure audit, focusing on friction surfaces, drainage systems, runway lighting, and end safety zones;
- **Require public release** of preliminary incident findings within 14 days and full investigative reports by AIB-N to promote transparency and accountability;
- **Include a special aviation safety intervention fund** in the 2026 budget to finance urgent runway reconstruction and safety upgrades at critical airports;
- **Amend aviation laws** to strengthen NCAA's enforcement powers and impose stiffer penalties for negligence or non-compliance by airport managers.

Through these measures, the National Assembly can play a decisive role in elevating Nigeria's aviation safety standards, reducing incident recurrence, and aligning with global best practices under ICAO protocols.



Background:

On Sunday, July 13, 2025, an Air Peace aircraft (Flight P47190) en route from Lagos to Port Harcourt veered off the runway upon landing at the Port Harcourt International Airport, Omagwa, Rivers State. The incident occurred under yet-to-be-disclosed circumstances. Although no casualties were recorded, passengers were visibly shaken, with some ignoring airport security protocols to film the aftermath¹. Air Peace confirmed the runway excursion and assured the public of its commitment to safety standards. Despite these reassurances from Air Peace, the incident raises concerns about aviation safety oversight and risk management in Nigerian airports, especially given similar past events in the region, including previous runway excursions at Port Harcourt and other airports².

Given the recurrent nature of such incidents and their potential to undermine passenger confidence and disrupt flight operations, legislative intervention may be necessary. This could include strengthening regulatory frameworks, ensuring rigorous compliance with safety protocols, and mandating transparent investigations with actionable recommendations to prevent future occurrences.

Issue:

This incident indicates persistent safety gaps in Nigeria's aviation infrastructure and oversight. Despite the absence of injuries, the runway excursion raises serious concerns about the operational state of Nigeria's airports, the adequacy of safety protocols, and the ability of aviation authorities to prevent runway-related incidents. Port Harcourt airport, in particular, has a record of past safety-related events, and this recurrence may reflect systemic regulatory and infrastructure shortcomings.

Rationale:

- Runway excursions are among the most frequent types of aviation incidents globally and often indicate lapses in runway design, aircraft braking systems, air traffic management, or weather forecasting.

¹ Okunbor, K. & Odiegwu, M. (2025, July 13). Air Peace aircraft overshoots runway at Port Harcourt Airport. *The Nation*. <https://thenationonlineng.net/air-peace-aircraft-overshoots-runway-at-port-harcourt-airport/>

² Omobola, D. (2025, July 13). Air Peace aircraft skids off runway at Port Harcourt airport. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/07/air-peace-aircraft-skids-off-runway-at-p-harcourt-airport/>



- Nigeria's regulatory authorities (the NCAA and AIB-N) must respond proactively to preserve public trust in domestic air travel.
- The potential for loss of life, reputational damage to carriers, and passenger panic necessitates a comprehensive legislative and executive response.
- ICAO guidelines mandate that runway excursions be addressed through a combination of infrastructure improvement, training, safety audits, and implementation of a Runway Safety Team at all airports.
- The National Assembly has a constitutional role to ensure public safety and fiscal accountability in federally operated aviation infrastructure.

Recommendations to the National Assembly for Legislative Actions:

The House and Senate Committees on Aviation may wish to consider the following actions:

1. **Summon** the NCAA, FAAN, AIB-N, and Air Peace to provide briefings on the incident and the general status of runway safety nationwide.
2. **Review** and legislate the mandatory establishment of ICAO-compliant Runway Safety Teams (RSTs) at all international and domestic airports to conduct routine safety assessments and incident-prevention planning.
3. **Commission** an independent infrastructure audit of Category A and B airport runways, focusing on lighting, drainage, friction coefficients, and runway end safety areas (RESA) as part of oversight mechanisms.
4. **Require** the NCAA and AIB-N to publish preliminary findings on all runway excursions within 14 days of occurrence, followed by a full investigative report.
5. **Include** in the 2026 Appropriation Bill a special intervention fund for runway reconstruction and safety system upgrades at high-traffic airports, beginning with Port Harcourt.
6. **Review and amend** aviation legislation where necessary to empower the NCAA to impose stiffer penalties on airport managers who fail to meet minimum safety thresholds.



Conclusion:

The Air Peace runway excursion at Port Harcourt International Airport indicates safety lapses in Nigeria's aviation sector. While no casualties occurred, the incident exposes weaknesses in infrastructure, oversight, and emergency response. Given the recurrence of similar events, this is a clear call for legislative action. The National Assembly, through its oversight role, can strengthen regulatory compliance to help prevent future incidents, rebuild public confidence, and ensure Nigeria aligns with international aviation safety standards.

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