



TRIBUNAL: FLIGHT WAS PRIVATE, PILOTS ON HOOK FOR CARGO

News / Business aviation



Bruno Odos and Pascal Fauret, the two convicted pilots who [fled the Dominican Republic](#) before an appeals trial in the so-called “Air Cocaine” case, have been taken into custody in France, where a judge is to hear them shortly.

Meanwhile, more details are emerging about why the Dominican tribunal decided to consider the pilots' flight in a Falcon 50 as private. Odos and Fauret asserted that it was commercial and thus claim not to be responsible for its cargo. Witness Melissa Rijo, who describes herself as the supervisor at the time of private flight activities for Swissport at Punta Cana Airport, testified that the Falcon 50 was operating privately. She added that F-GXMC was directed to an apron dedicated to commercial flights, taxied to the private flights area and was then towed close to the airport's perimeter fence, through which the 20-or-so suitcases filled with cocaine were later carried. Rijo also said, however, that she charged tax at the commercial flight rate.

Another witness, Valentin Rosado Vicioso, a high-ranking police officer, said the crew had deliberately obtained both commercial and private approvals for the upcoming flight. He alleged that the private approval would be the one used if everything went as planned and that the crew would resort to the commercial one if something went wrong.

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