Jamaican police capture CanJet hijacker

by UPI

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica -- The standoff between a man who seized a Canadian charter flight in Jamaica and authorities ended Monday with the capture of the hijacker, police said.

The gunman, described by authorities as "mentally challenged," seized the Boeing 737 Sunday at Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, robbed passengers, held several crew members hostage and demanded he be taken to Cuba, CNN reported.

CanJet Airlines Flight 918 originated in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and was on a scheduled stop at Montego Bay when the incident began, officials said. It was scheduled to fly to Santa Clara, Cuba.

The gunman fired a shot in the boarding bridge to the plane then took a number of passengers and crew hostage, said Elizabeth Scotton, a spokeswoman for the company that runs the airport.

The aircraft was carrying 174 passengers and eight crew members, Kent Woodside, CanJet's vice president, said. The hijacker earlier released all of the passengers, all from Canada, along with two crew members.

Two of the remaining six crew members locked themselves in the cockpit, Jamaican Information Minister Daryl Vaz said.

Vaz said the hijacking was not an act of terrorism, CNN reported

"The hijacking is that from a mentally challenged youngster and not anything that would be of concern in terms of an international incident," he said. "Thank God, there is no injuries in terms of the passengers. ... His demand was to go to Cuba."

The man's father and Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding were among the negotiators, CNN reported.

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