

BUSINESS

Jury orders Boeing to pay \$49.5 million to family of 737 MAX crash victim

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Samya Stumo in an undated handout photo provided by the Stumo family. Stumo was killed in the crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 in 2019. *Stumo Family/via Getty Images*

A federal jury in Chicago awarded \$49.5 million Wednesday to the family of a young woman who was killed when a Boeing 737 MAX jet crashed in Ethiopia in 2019. The verdict resolves one of the last remaining cases stemming from two deadly crashes that killed a total of 346 people and happened within months of each other.

Samya Stumo was 24 years old when she died in the second 737 MAX crash.

"Our daughter got on the plane completely trusting," her mother, Nadia Milleron, told NPR in 2019. "She was going on her first assignment in East Africa for an NGO which works on healthcare. And she never dreamed that there would be any problem with the plane itself, and there was a huge problem."

Boeing had already admitted responsibility for the crash, so the trial was only about how much the company should pay in compensatory damages.

Boeing reached an agreement with the Justice Department to avoid criminal prosecution. The company also agreed to confidential settlements in dozens of lawsuits brought by family members of the crash victims. But a few cases have gone to trial.



Nadia Milleron, whose daughter Samya Stumo died in the Boeing 737 MAX crash in 2019, speaks during a memorial protest in front of Boeing's offices in Arlington, Virginia in 2023. Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images

"We are gratified for the opportunity to try the compensatory damages case," said attorneys Shanin Specter and Elizabeth Crawford of the law firm Kline & Specter, who are representing Stumo's estate.

The jury awarded the family \$21 million for Stumo's experience on the fatal flight, \$16.5 million for the family's loss of her companionship and \$12 million for the family's grief, the lawyers said in a statement. They also indicated they will pursue punitive damages against

Boeing executives and the company's suppliers on appeal after those claims were dismissed.

In November, a separate jury awarded more than \$28 million in damages to the family of Shikha Garg, a United Nations environmental worker who was also killed in the 2019 crash.

"We are deeply sorry to all who lost loved ones on Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302," Boeing said in a statement. "While we have resolved nearly all of these claims through settlements, families are entitled to pursue their claims through the court process, and we respect their right to do so."

Since those two crashes, Samya Stumo's family has joined with the families of dozens of other victims in pushing to hold Boeing and federal regulators accountable for their mistakes.

"She was light. She was beautiful. She was intellectual. She had great judgment. She was a leader. She was always bringing us together," her father, Michael Stumo, told NPR in 2019. "We're traumatized. We don't want to be doing this. But we want to avoid a third crash."