
US jury awards \$49.5 mn damages to Boeing 737 MAX victim's family

New York (AFP) – A US jury awarded \$49.5 million in damages on Wednesday to the family of a 24-year-old American who perished in a 2019 Boeing 737 MAX crash.

Issued on: 14/05/2026 - 12:17



The Boeing 737 MAX crash in March 2019 claimed 157 lives © JUSTIN TALLIS / AFP/File

The suit was brought by relatives of Samya Stumo, who died in the March 2019 Ethiopian Airlines crash which claimed a total of 157 lives.

The Chicago jury, which deliberated from around two hours, found that "the total amount of damages suffered by Plaintiff is \$49.5 million", according to documents.

Nearly all of the civil lawsuits around the crash had been settled out of court. In Stumo's case, however, her family had been unable to reach an agreement with Boeing ahead of the trial, which began on Monday.

"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."

Stumo was killed en route to Kenya for her first assignment with ThinkWell, a public health NGO that aimed to increase access to health care in Africa and Asia.

But the plane went down shortly after taking off from Addis Ababa, killing everyone aboard. The Ethiopian crash followed a Lion Air crash about four and a half months earlier in Indonesia.

The two crashes claimed 346 lives in total.

'Negligent'

Boeing acknowledged that anti-stall software was implicated in both accidents.

Stumo's family and their lawyer Shanin Specter did not immediately reply to a request for comment from AFP.

Specter told the Chicago federal civil court that Boeing was "negligent", the aircraft was "unsafe" and that "Boeing caused this crash and these deaths."

The trial featured testimony from Stumo's relatives, including father Michael Stumo, who said the disaster still haunts the family.

"It feels like since she's been gone, we don't have permission to be happy," Michael Stumo testified. "Sometimes you catch yourself being happy, and you correct yourself, like you shouldn't be."

Speaking ahead of the verdict, the aviation giant's attorney, Dan Webb, expressed the company's sorrow at the crash.

He said that Boeing's "only disagreement" with the Stumo family was "on the exact amount of compensation."

A US judge dropped criminal charges against Boeing in 2025 over the deadly crashes as part of an agreement between the company and prosecutors.

In November, a Chicago jury awarded a widower of one of the MAX victims \$28.45 million. A second trial, in January, was halted after an out-of-court settlement was reached after the second day.

The next trial is scheduled for August 3 and focuses on the death of Michael Ryan of Ireland.