

## **Mother and Baby rescued four days after Colombia plane crash**

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**Bogota:** A Colombian woman who survived a plane crash with her months-old baby was rescued four days after they were lost in the jungle.

Maria Nelly Murillo and her child were aboard a twin-engine Cessna that crashed Saturday in a remote area of western Colombia shortly after taking off from the city of Quibdo.

The crash killed the pilot, but rescuers said Thursday that a heavy load of fresh fish in the cabin absorbed much of the crash impact, allowing Murillo and her son to survive against the odds.

She forced open the cabin door and climbed a hill to get away from the aircraft, which she feared might explode, the air force reported.

Apparently disoriented, she wandered in the jungle carrying her child, surviving on the watery liquid inside unripe coconuts and trying unsuccessfully to trap rodents for food, Acisclo Renteria, the Red Cross volunteer who eventually found her on Wednesday told The Associated Press by phone from Quibdo.

Murillo said she and her son also drank rainwater.

"When it rained, I'd get up and gather water from the few leaves that had water on them and I'd drink it with the boy," Murillo, her voice weak and face covered in bandages, told local media in brief remarks from a hospital bed in Quibdo. She was later taken to a hospital in Medellin for further treatment.

Renteria said the search party was aided by a trail of clues left by Murillo, including a flip-flop sandal, her son's birth certificate, a cellphone and the remains of coconuts. A helicopter was also sent out with a loudspeaker urging the woman to return to the crash site.

But after two more days rescuers began to lose hope. Then Renteria said he spotted a swarm of flies buzzing over something on the ground. As he approached, Murillo began to shout for help and attempted to get to her feet in a state of near-starvation and apparent shock, he said.

"I told her: 'Mama, Mama, be calm. The Colombian Red Cross is here to rescue you,'" Renteria said.

During the next four hours, while waiting for a helicopter to arrive, rescuers administered Murillo first aid and fed her water and crackers by hand. Renteria said he stayed with the baby, cleaning its mouth of debris and keeping it snug against his overalls.

He said a grateful Murillo asked him to be the boy's godfather.

The rescuer, who is unemployed and displaced from his hometown by violence stemming from Colombia's long-running conflict, said he didn't really reflect on the miracle survival until night fell and Murillo was safely in the care of a hospital.

"I thanked my little God for allowing me to save these two people," Renteria said. "One thing is telling you on the phone what we experienced, but it's quite another to have lived it."

- AP