

Ramadan 2018 - country by country

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



In most of the world, Ramadan in 2018 is expected to begin on **May 16** and end on **June 14**, with both dates depending on lunar sightings. Eid-al-Fitr is expected to be observed June 14-15, though the exact dates will vary by country. Across the countries which celebrate the holiday, there will be delays processing permits, slots, and other operational requirements involving CAA's and Airport Authorities.

Foreign nationals and their employers can expect immigration processing delays over the coming weeks in the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey and parts of Asia during the observance of the month of Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitr. Many government offices worldwide reduce their hours and/or close during Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitr.

Algeria: The month of Ramadan is expected to begin May 16 or 17 and end June 13 or 14, depending on lunar sightings. While public offices are not officially closed during Ramadan, most government offices will open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 3:30 p.m. Government offices will also likely be closed on Eid-al-Fitr. Processing delays can be expected for initial and renewal applications due to the reduced working hours.

Bangladesh: The month of Ramadan will begin on May 15. While government offices will operate with reduced workforce during this month and until June 17, they will be closed from June 15 to 17 in observance of Eid-ul-Fitr. Processing delays of pending applications should be expected throughout the month of Ramadan.

Brunei: The Ramadan season will begin on May 16 in Brunei. Government offices, including the Immigration Department, Labour Department and Energy Industry Department (EID) are expected to operate with reduced hours throughout the month of Ramadan. Government offices will be closed for Hari Raya Aidilfitri on June 15 to June 18, depending on lunar sighting. Processing delays are expected throughout Ramadan and may continue for up to two weeks after Ramadan ends.

Indonesia: The month of Ramadan is expected to begin on May 17 ending with Hari Raya Idul Fitri, which will fall on June 15. Most government offices and consular posts are expected to reduce their business days by one to two hours throughout the month of Ramadan, and closures will likely occur several days before and after the Idul Fitri holiday (around June 11 to 22) due to staffing shortages. Processing delays are

expected to occur during this period.

Malaysia: The month of Ramadan will begin on May 17. Government offices, including the Immigration Department and other Work Pass adjudicating departments such as the eXpats Centre of the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation Sdn. Bhd. and MYXpats Centre of the Expatriate Services Division, are expected to operate with reduced hours throughout the month of Ramadan. Government offices will be closed for Hari Raya Aidifitri from June 15 to 17. In addition to those days, eXpats Centre will also be closed on June 14. Processing delays are expected throughout the month of Ramadan and may continue for up to three weeks after the end of Ramadan.

Middle East/North Africa (Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates): The month of Ramadan is expected to start May 16 or 17 and last until June 14 or 15, 2018. Government offices across the Middle East will be working reduced hours during Ramadan, which may affect processing times for all immigration applications. Foreign nationals and employers are advised to check with the relevant office for exact hours of operation. Processing delays could continue in the weeks following Ramadan due to Eid-al-Fitr holiday and application backlogs that accumulate during the closures.

Turkey: Government offices will be closed June 14 (afternoon), June 15 (full day), and potentially June 18. Processing delays can be expected for initial and renewal applications due to government office closures.

Potholes at HKNW/Wilson Airport, Nairobi

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



Some pictures have been doing the rounds on social media showing huge potholes on some the taxiways and part of the runway at **HKNW/Wilson** — Nairobi's second airport — and a DHC-8 Dash 8 aircraft which got stuck in the mud, trying to avoid them.



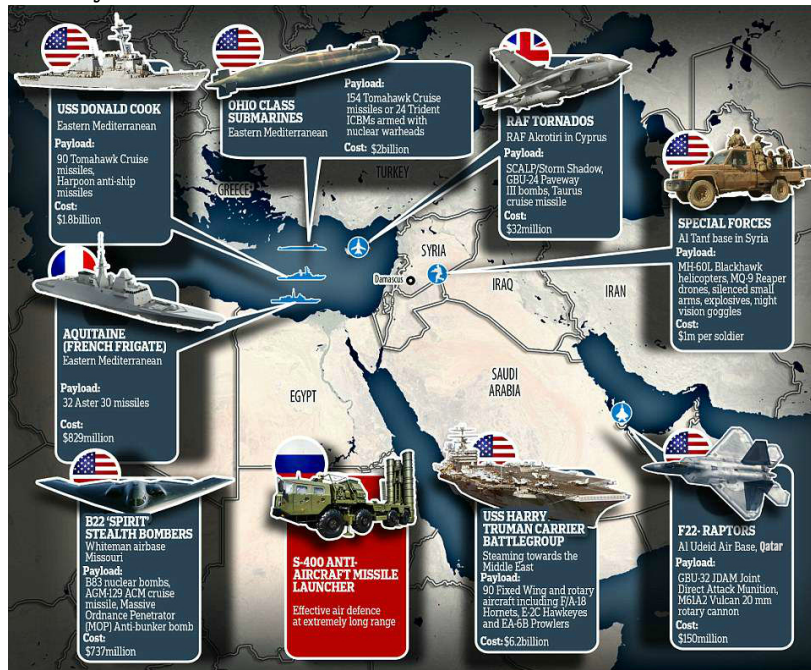


According to the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) website, Wilson Airport is “one of the busiest airports in terms of aircraft movement in East and Central Africa. However, so far the KAA have not issued any warnings on either their website or by Notam regarding the poor state of the taxiways and runway.

European air traffic warned over Syria strikes

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



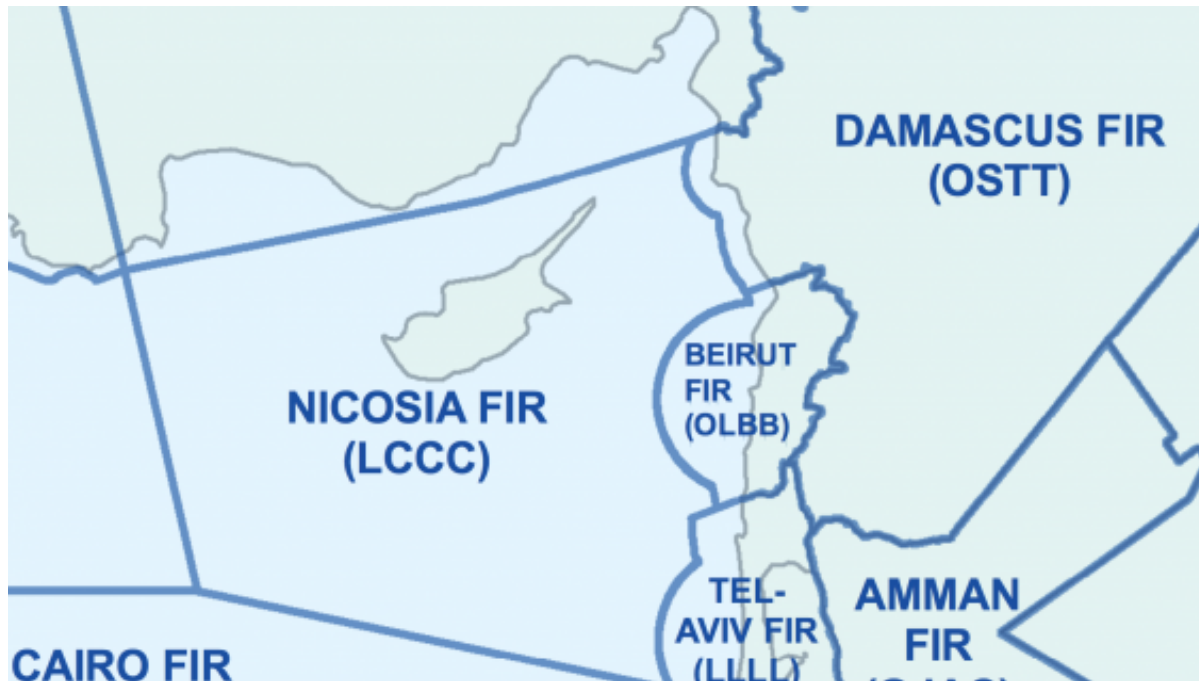
EASA are warning of possible air strikes into Syria being launched from locations within the LCCC/Nicosia FIR over the next 72 hours (Apr 11-14).

Eurocontrol have published a 'Rapid Alert Notification' on their website, with a statement from EASA that reads:

"Due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria with air-to-ground and / or cruise missiles within the next 72 hours, and the possibility of intermittent disruption of radio navigation equipment, due consideration needs to be taken when planning flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean / Nicosia FIR area."

Very few commercial flights operate over Syria, and authorities in the US, UK, France and Germany have all previously issued warnings for Syrian airspace.

But many airlines regularly transit the LCCC/Nicosia FIR: there are frequent holiday flights to the main Cypriot airports of LCLK/Larnaca and LCPH/Paphos; overflight traffic from Europe to the likes of OLBA/Beirut, OJAI/Amman and LLBG/Tel Aviv; as well as traffic from Istanbul heading south to the Gulf and beyond.



Last year, two US warships in the eastern Mediterranean fired missiles at an air base in Syria after a chemical weapons attack by the Assad regime killed more than 80 people.

This week, following another suspected chemical attack by the Syrian government against civilians in a rebel-held town in Syria, the US President Donald Trump warned there would be a “forceful” response. On Apr 11, he took to Twitter to warn Russia to prepare for strike on Syria:



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and “smart!” You shouldn’t be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!

11:57 AM - 11 Apr 2018

For the airstrikes on Syria last year, the US gave Russia advance warning of the attack, and Russian forces opted not to attempt to shoot down the missiles using its air defence systems stationed in the region.

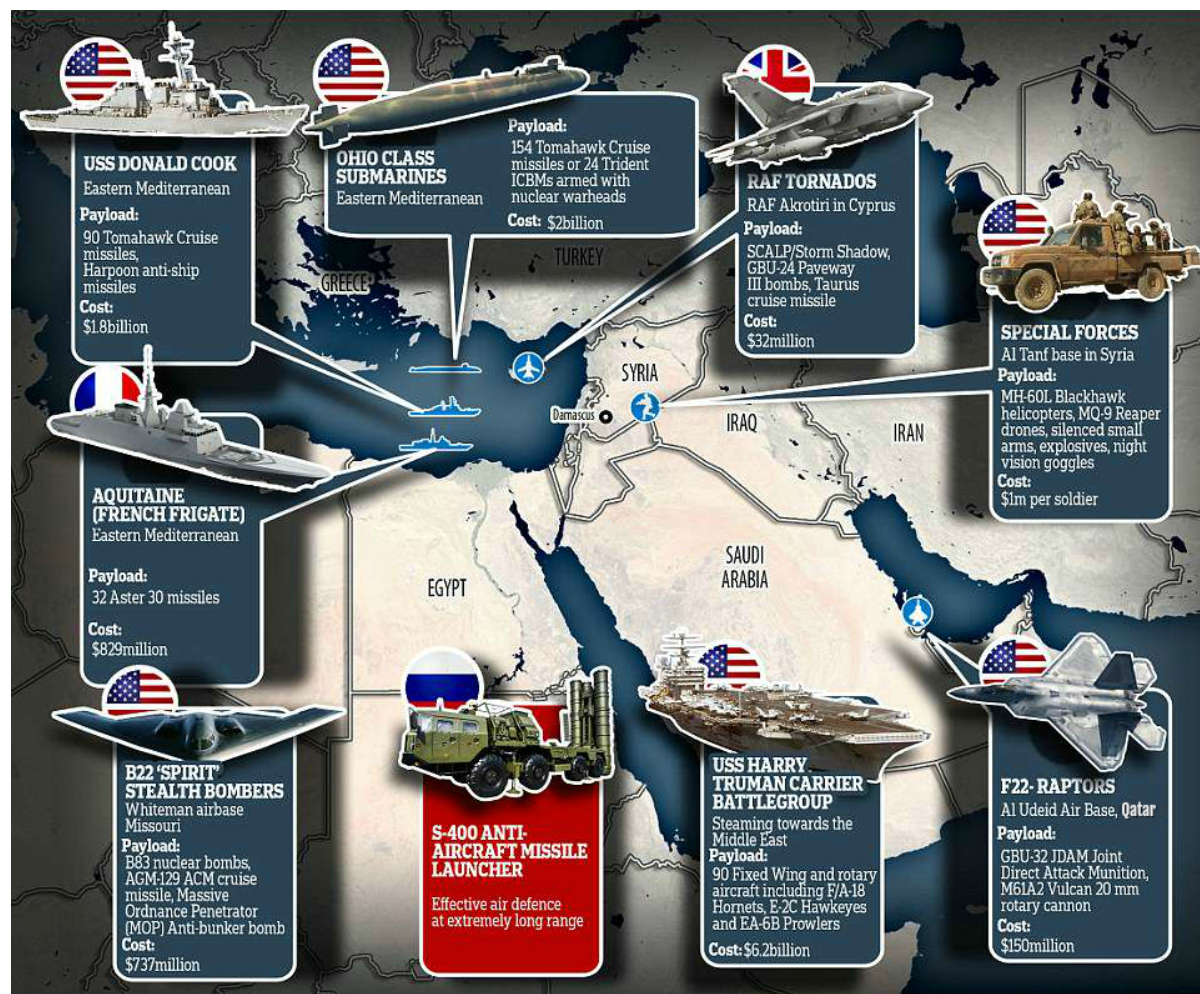
However, this time round things could be very different. This week, Russia’s ambassador to Lebanon reminded the US that the head of the Russian military has said his forces in Syria would not only shoot down any missiles that threatened them but would target the source of the weapons as well.

The only US warship currently in the Mediterranean and capable of a possible strike is the USS Donald Cook, which left port in Larnaca and started to patrol in vicinity of Syria on Apr 9. According to some reports, it has since weighed anchor off Syrian territorial waters, and has been “buzzed” by low-flying Russian military jets.

Another 3 warships of the Sixth Fleet are already in the Atlantic Ocean, and on Apr 11 the entire US Truman Fleet (including an aircraft carrier, 6 destroyers, and nearly 6,500 sailors) departed Norfolk,

Virginia, to head to the Mediterranean Sea. However, it may take up to a week for any of these warships to arrive.

Here's an overview of US and coalition forces' military options currently thought to be on offer in the eastern Mediterranean:



With the downing of MH17 by a surface-to-air missile over Ukraine in 2014, as well as all the recent unannounced missile tests by North Korea, there has been increased focus by the aviation community on the risks posed by conflict zones. If any missiles are launched from the Eastern Mediterranean in the next few days, be prepared for possible last-minute reroutes, as any Notams that get published may not give much warning.

Further reading:

One of our biggest missions in OPSGROUP is to share risk information and keep operators aware of the current threat picture. Check out Safeairspace for the most up-to-date information on airspace safety around the world.

Here's what happens when Europe's slot

system crashes

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



On 3rd April 2018, a failure with the central European slot computer plunged the entire ATC system into crisis mode, with multiple knock on effects. Here's what happened:

1. The system that allocates ATC slots to flights, and therefore manages the flow of traffic across Europe, **failed at 1026 UTC**. It's called the ETFMS (Enhanced Tactical Flow Management System), but aka "The Slot Computer"
2. There is a **Contingency Plan** for this situation. Airports are supposed to use this, which gives a quick table of departure intervals allowed according to the destination. You can view the plan here and see what it looks like for all the main airports: <http://www.eurocontrol.int/publications/network-manager-atfcm-procedural-contingency-plan>
3. Some airlines reported that Istanbul, amongst others, were initially **holding all departures**, as local authorities were not well versed in the Contingency Plan and were unclear as to how to handle the situation. Eurocontrol then started calling round the 70 main airports to make sure they knew what they were supposed to do!
4. **All flight plans filed before 1026Z were lost**. Operators were instructed to re-file all their FPL's, as well as those for the rest of the day, as Eurocontrol said they would only switch back on the slot computer once they reached a critical mass of filed flight plans in the system.
5. With the Contingency Plan in place, there was around a **10% total capacity reduction** across the whole of Europe. Actual delay numbers - usually available on the NOP - were impossible to verify, because of all the missing FPL's in the system.
6. Normally, Eurocontrol will re-address your FPL to ATC Centres **outside the IFPZ**. During the slot computer outage, operators had to do this manually, ie. find the FIR's they would cross, get their AFTN addresses (like HECCZQZX), and send them their FPL.

7. The actual system failure was **fixed at around 1400Z**, but only went back online at around 1800Z, after it had been thoroughly tested and Eurocontrol were happy there were enough FPL's back in the system.

In over 20 years of operation, Eurocontrol said "the ETFMS has only had one other outage which occurred in 2001. The system currently manages up to 36,000 flights a day."

Expect breathalyzer during German Ramp checks

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



German authorities confirm they have been conducting random breathalyzer tests during ramp checks since as far back as Jan 2017, despite this not being part of the official EU SAFA ramp inspection guidelines.

In Dec 2016, following the accident of the Germanwings Flight 9525, EASA published **a proposal to the European Commission** to better support pilot mental fitness. One of their recommendations was to introduce random alcohol screening as a part of ramp checks within the EU.

Although that proposal has still not been adopted yet, local authorities in Germany say they can still perform these tests on the basis of German national law alone.

Have you had a recent ramp check anywhere with any surprise items not part of the standard checklist? Comment below...

Further reading

- **Official SAFA/SACA site at EASA**

- **Our advice on how to make a ramp check painless**
 - **Opsgroup's SAFA ramp inspection checklist**
-

New rules for charter flights to Greece

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



On Mar 23, the Greek CAA introduced a new rule requiring charter flights on non EU-registered aircraft with up to 19 seats to apply for an annual TCO license before operating to Greece.

This is in addition to having to obtain the standard landing permit, as well as the TCO approval from EASA.

So far, the CAA haven't officially published an English version of the new rule anywhere, although they say that it will be updated in the AIP at some point. But as handling in Greece is mandatory, they decided to distribute the information to all handling agents & aviation service providers in Greece for them to notify their customers directly.

Click **here** for the translated version of that document, with all the info you need to know about how to apply.

It looks like you can't apply for this new TCO license through the CAA directly; you can only do so through your "legal representative in Greece" – which can be your handling agent, allowing at least 5 working days to obtain the license if all submitted paperwork is correct.

Aerolineas aircraft grounded due to hail damage

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



The Argentinian airline Aerolineas has suspended domestic ticket sales until Mar 25. They say multiple aircraft were recently damaged by hail in SABA/Buenos Aires during a storm on Mar 14, which means they now need to reprogram their schedule until the aircraft get fixed.

The aircraft that sustained the damage were 15 Boeing 737's in the airline's domestic and regional fleet. Strangely, perhaps, no other airlines have reported similar damage to their aircraft from the storm.



Aerolineas say they are now assessing the aircraft damage with help from Boeing, with the hope that they will have most of the aircraft back in operation before the Easter travel weekend.

Kurdistan airports to re-open

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



The Iraqi Prime Minister has lifted the government ban on international flights to the Kurdish airports ORER/Erbil and ORSU/Sulaymaniyah.

The central government will take full control of the airports, and will start allowing international flights to resume in the coming days. No international flights have operated from these airports since the end September 2017. Their closure was seen as a punitive measure taken by the Iraqi central government following the September 25th independence referendum in the Kurdistan Region.

The authorities have now withdrawn the Notams that were previously in place for both of these airports advising that they were closed to international flights. Both Iran and Turkey currently still have Notams in place prohibiting flights to these airports from using their airspace – but we expect these to be updated soon to reflect the lifting of the ban.

A0661/18 NOTAMR A6765/17

Q) LTXX/QAFXX/IV/NB0/E /000/999/3901N03524E465

A) LTAA LTBB B) 1802010551 C) 1803312359 EST

E) ALL TFC FROM/TO ORSU AND ORER AERODROMES (ALSO AS ALTERNATE AERODROME) ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO USE TURKISH AIRSPACE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE EXC EMERGENCY, AMBULANCE AND HUMANITARIAN AID FLIGHTS.

A0223/18 NOTAMR A3746/17

Q) OIIX/QAFXX/E/000/999/

A) OIIX B) 1801160610 C) 1804160600 EST

E) ALL TRAFFIC FM OR TO ORSU AND ORER ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO USE TEHRAN FIR.

Further reading:

- Read the updated guidance on Iraq airspace safety at [Safeairspace](#).
- Western countries lift bans on Iraq airspace.
- For detailed info on Iraq's specific permit requirements, as well as every other country in the world, take a look [here](#).

Sao Paulo's second airport to regain international status... for nine days

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



For the first time in over twenty years, the city's second airport, SBSP/Congonhas, will be open to international flights, from 9-18th March 2018.

This is happening as the World Economic Forum on Latin America 2018 will be taking place in São Paulo from Mar 13-15, and as space is limited at the main airport, SBGR/São Paulo International, the authorities think they'll need extra space for attendees' aircraft. So at SBSP/Congonhas, only BA/GA will be accepted, and nothing larger than 737BBJ / A319ACJ.

This will also serve as a trial period to check if the airport could regain its international status on a permanent basis. Scheduled international flights stopped operating from Congonhas back in 1985, and the airport finally lost its international status in 2008.

The airport's runways were resurfaced last resurfaced back in 2007, but were not extended because of the rapid growth of São Paulo, which has now completely surrounded the airport. The longest runway is 1940 meters, and the airport is open from 07-23 local time, seven days a week.



Price hike at Greek airports

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



On 1st April 2018, Fraport will be increasing the rates for landing and parking fees at the 14 international

airports it manages in Greece: Aktion, Chania, Corfu, Kavala, Kefalonia, Kos, Lesbos, Mykonos, Rhodes, Samos, Santorini, Skiathos, Thessaloniki and Zakynthos.

Welcome to Greece

- our prices have doubled!

- › Mykonos
- › Rhodes
- › Samos
- › Santorini
- › Skiathos
- › Thessaloniki
- › Zakynthos
- › Aktion
- › Chania
- › Corfu
- › Kavala
- › Kefalonia
- › Kos
- › Lesbos



Parking charges used to be simple here: at every airport, it was free for the first five hours, and then EUR 1.08 per ton (MTOW) for every 24 hours after that. That same price applied regardless of aircraft size.

Now things are set to become a little more complicated, but effectively, parking will now be at least twice as expensive as it used to be, with even higher costs being introduced for longer stays during the summer months:

Calculation Basis: MTOW & Parking Time

Winter Period (01.11- 31.03)

Below 10 tons	Per ton for every 24 hours	EUR 2,50
Over 10 tons/ Parking up to 5 hours	-	No Charge
Over 10 tons/ Parking time over 5 hours	Per ton for every 24 hours	EUR 2,50

Summer Period (01.04- 31.10)

Below 10 tons/ Parking up to 24 hours	Per ton for the first 24 hours	EUR 5,00
Below 10 tons/ Parking over 24 hours	Per ton for every 24 hours after the first 24H (Note 3)	EUR 10,00
Over 10 tons / parking up to 5 hours	-	No charge
Over 10 tons/ parking for 5 till 10 hours	Per ton	EUR 2,50
Over 10 tons/ parking for 10 till 24 hours	Per ton	EUR 5,00
Over 10 tons/ parking over 24 hours	Full charge for the first 24 hours and per charge for each 24H after the first (Note 3)	EUR 10,00

Landing fees are going up too. Aircraft below 10 tonnes have always had to pay a flat fee, and from 1st April, these are set to double. For larger aircraft, Fraport set the rate per ton (MTOW), and with the exception of LGKV/Kevala and LGSA/Chania, these are being increased across the board:

	2017 (EUR per ton)	2018 (EUR per ton)	
LGMK/Mykanos	1.80	2.47	+ 37%
LGSR/Santorini	1.97	2.55	+ 30%
LGTS/Thassaloniki	1.73	2.20	+ 27%
LGMT/Lesbos	2.02	2.50	+ 24%
LGSM/Samos	2.02	2.50	+ 24%
LGSK/Skiathos	2.02	2.50	+ 24%
LGPZ/Aktion	1.81	2.18	+ 21%
LGRP/Rhodes	2.02	2.35	+ 16%
LGKO/Kos	2.14	2.43	+ 14%
LGKR/Corfu	2.17	2.39	+ 10%
LGZA/Zakynthos	2.16	2.36	+ 9%
LGKF/Kefalonia	2.18	2.30	+ 6%
LGKV/Kavala	2.10	2.00	- 5%
LGSA/Chania	2.13	2.02	- 6%

Operating to these Greek airports has become increasingly challenging since their privatisation in April 2017. Fraport initially **struggled to deal with providing parking to non-scheduled and business aviation**, and **new slot procedures were introduced** to try to better manage the volume of requests being made.

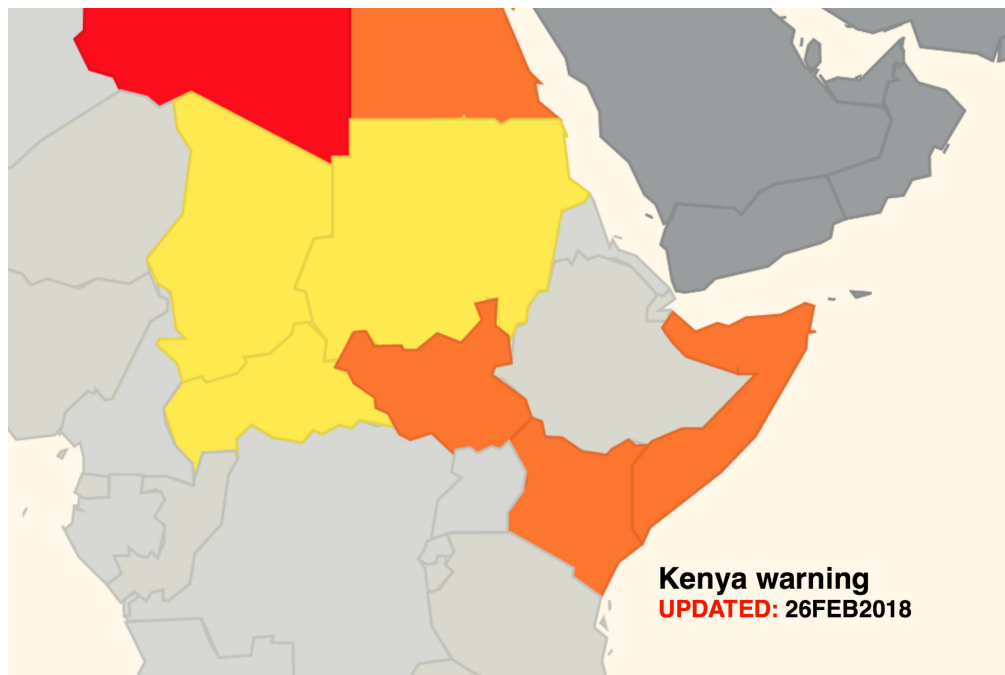
Ryanair have already complained about the price hike, as well as a new EUR 90 fee that will be charged to send a fire engine every time a plane refuels whilst passengers are being boarded – something which they say does not happen anywhere else in the world except Greece.

With the new rates set to come into force on 1st April 2018, many operators may prefer to take their business elsewhere. As the President of Corfu CAA Association, Dimitris Roussos, says – “[the price increase] is exorbitant and almost prohibitive. A lot of people will choose other airports such as Ioannina which have lower charges and where they can refuel and spend 1-2 days instead of coming to ‘expensive’ Corfu. It is quite probable that we will see the Corfu Air Club move to Ioannina as well as a significant decrease in the number of small private aircraft visiting Corfu in the summer.”

Full details of the changes to the landing and parking fees at all 14 airports can be found on **Fraport’s dedicated page**.

Kenya airspace threat downgraded

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



The FAA has revised its warning for Kenyan airspace – the area to ‘exercise caution’ is now limited **only** to that airspace east of 40 degrees East longitude below FL260 (i.e. the border region with Somalia, and 12nm off the east coast of Kenya). Prior to this, their warning applied to **all** airspace in Kenya below FL260.

Published on 26 Feb 2018, the warning maintains the same wording to clarify the type of weapons and phases of flight that the FAA is concerned about, specifically:

- fire from small arms,
- indirect fire weapons (such as mortars and rockets), and
- anti-aircraft weapons such as MANPADS.

The scenarios considered highest risk include :

- landings and takeoffs,
- low altitudes, and
- aircraft on the ground.

The updated guidance is intended for US operators and FAA License holders, but in reality is used by most International Operators including EU and Asian carriers, since only four countries currently provide useful information on airspace security and conflict zones.

The Notam uses FL260 as the minimum safe level, though we would suggest, as usual, that a higher level closer to FL300 is more sensible.

You can read the NOTAM in full on our Kenya page on **SafeAirspace.net**, a **collaborative and information sharing tool used by airlines, business jet operators, state agencies, military, and private members of OPSGROUP**.

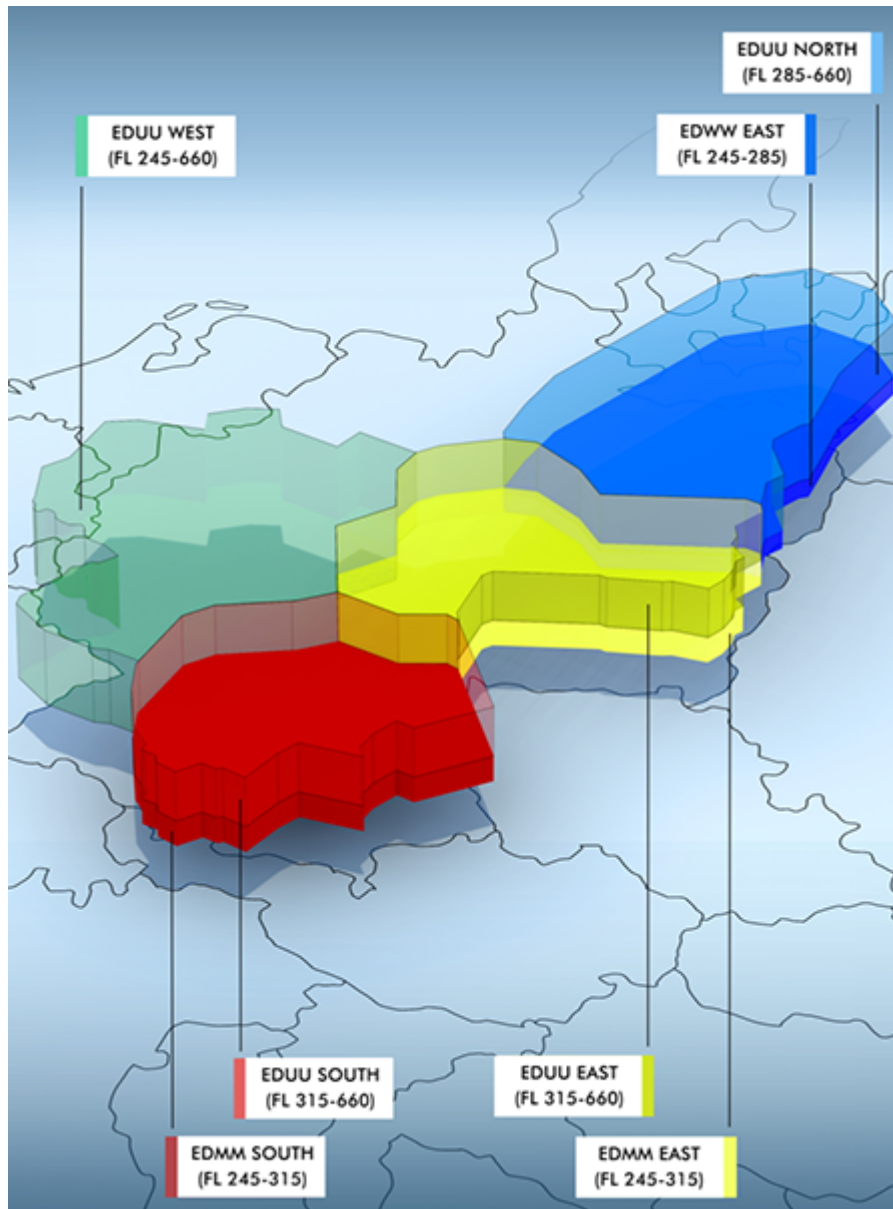
More direct routings across Europe

David Mumford

12 May, 2018

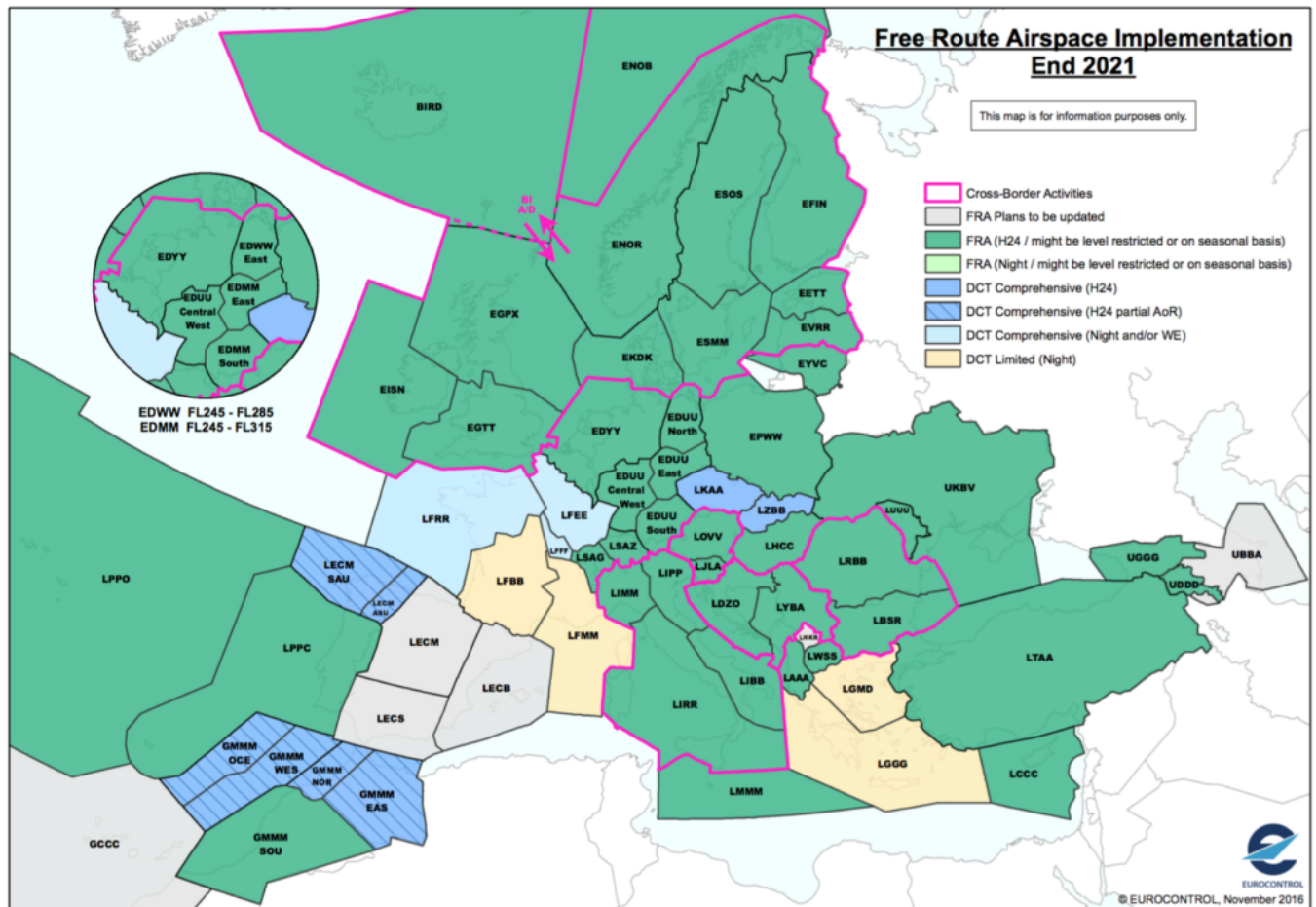


Sectors of airspace over southern Germany are ahead of schedule with plans to bring in Free Route Airspace (FRA). With effect from 1st March 2018, FRA will be implemented in the EDUU/Karlsruhe UAC, EDWW/Bremen ACC , and EDMM/Munchen ACC above FL245.



By the end of 2019, most European airspace is expected to have implemented Free Route Airspace, with all airspace having this type of operations by 2021/2022.

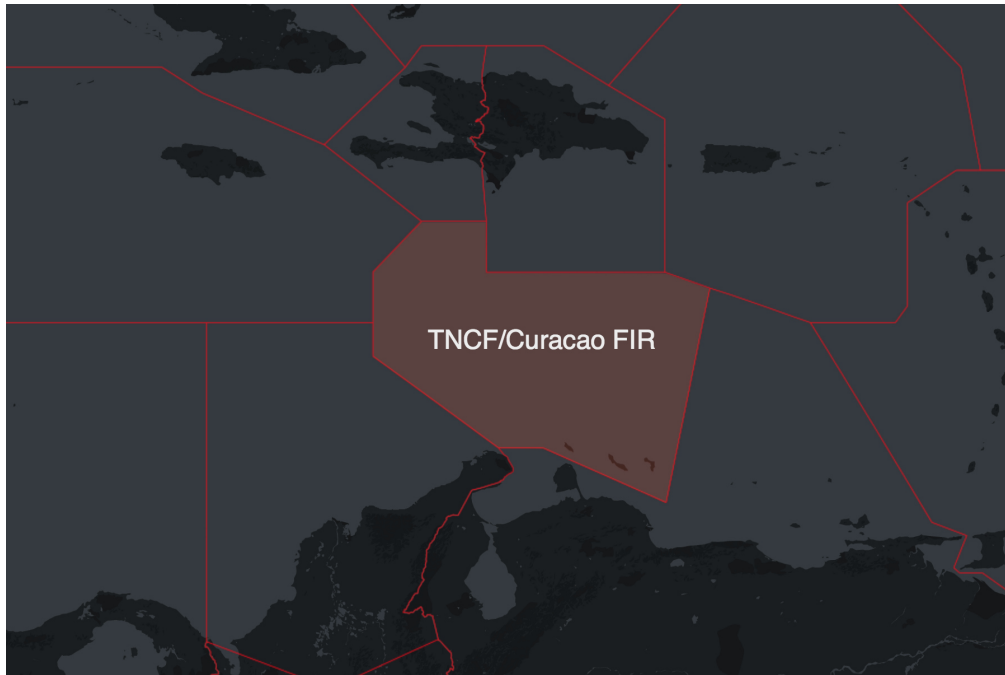
We like the idea of Free Route Airspace – direct routing is the way of the future. We also like cool maps. Thankfully, good old Eurocontrol have provided us with some great ones, showing where Free Route Airspace currently exists, and where it will be implemented in the future:



For everything you could possibly want to know about FRA in Europe, check out Eurocontrol's page on it here: <http://www.eurocontrol.int/articles/free-route-airspace>

No entry to Curacao FIR unless you prepay

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



In Jan 2018, Curacao began denying non-IATA members permission to overfly the TNCF/Curacao FIR if they have not prepaid for navigation fees. Here's the AIC that carries the announcement.

Essentially, that means you, if you're not an airline.

Several OPSGROUP members have since reported being denied airspace entry. Given that a lot of north-south traffic tends to use the TNCF FIR for overflights, this is important information for ad-hoc flights.

If you're not an IATA member, you'll want to head to <https://dc-ansp.org/> get a login, and make your prepayments based on your planned route. If you don't create an account, or don't prepay, they'll likely reject your flight through the FIR.

If you'd like a breakdown of the charges, you can find those in the Dutch Caribbean eAIP, Gen 4.2

Indonesia mandates ADS-B above FL290

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



Since the start of Jan 2018, all aircraft flying in Indonesian airspace at or above FL290 need to be equipped with ADS-B (Mode S Transponder and GNSS source position). Below that flight level, it remains optional.

Indonesian airspace is split into two FIR's – WIIF/Jakarta and WAAF/Ujung Pandang:



To the north, Singapore have required the carriage of ADS-B on certain airways since 2013; and to the south, Australia have mandated ADS-B for all airspace above FL290 since early 2017. So there's a vast section of connected airspace in the region where ADS-B is now required.

For **flight planning**, make sure you show the correct ADS-B designators in Item 10 of the FPL:

- **E** - Transponder — Mode S, including aircraft identification, pressure - altitude and ADS - B Out capability.
or...
- **L** - Transponder—Mode S, including aircraft identification, pressure-altitude, ADS-B Out and enhanced surveillance capability.
together with...
- **B1** ADS-B “out” capability using 1090MHz extended squitter.
or...
- **B2** ADS-B “out” and “in” capability using 1090MHz extended squitter.

Further reading:

- Read Indonesia’s AIC on this ADS-B mandate in full **here**.
- Read our article: **Australia ADS-B requirements: 2017 onwards**
- Read our article: **Taiwan pushes ADS-B requirement to 2020**

New slot procedure at VIDP/Delhi

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



All flights to/from VIDP/Delhi Airport now need to get slots approved, and for international flights, you can only apply for these up to a maximum of 5 days in advance.

They're calling these slots "Delhi Arrival Clearance Numbers" (DACN) for arrivals, and "Delhi Departure Clearance Numbers" (DDCN) for departures, and you can apply for them by emailing flight.data@gmrgroup.in and copying-in dial.aocc@gmrgroup.in.

Make sure you put your slot number in Item 18 of your FPL. If you miss your slot time by more than 30 minutes, expect to have to re-apply for a completely new slot.

Also, watch out for long stays – the maximum ground time for everything except scheduled flights is now 3 days, unless you go into a hangar.

Full details of these new rules can be found **here**.

Greenland FIR to change its name

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



The BGGL/Sondrestrom FIR, that covers all of Greenland's airspace, is changing its name to the 'Nuuk' FIR, effective Mar 1.

This name change has come about following the reallocation, during autumn 2014, of the COM Centre, Rescue Coordination Centre and the Flight Information Centre from BGSF/Kangerlussuaq Airport (commonly referred to as Sondrestrom airport) to Greenland's capital, Nuuk.

So "Nuuk Information" is the new identification/radio callsign for the aeronautical station serving the Flight Information Centre in Greenland; whereas "Nuuk AFIS" will still get you through to the aerodrome flight information service at BGGH/Nuuk Airport.

You can read the full AIC **here**.

Further reading:

- Do you use BGBW/Narsarsuaq as a trans-atlantic alternate? Watch out, you may receive a hefty bill. Full details [here](#).
-

Feb 2018: Tel Aviv Airport closes as a precaution against attack

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



LLBG/Tel-aviv: Israel's main airport briefly suspended operations on Feb 10, due to military clashes along the northern border with Syria.

Two Israeli pilots were forced to abandon their F-16 jet, which crashed near the border after being hit by a Syrian anti-aircraft missile. The jet was on a mission in which it struck an Iranian facility in Syria that had previously operated a drone which Israel shot down over its territory.



This resulted in all flights from LLBG/Tel-aviv Airport being grounded for around an hour starting at 9am local time, as a precaution against any further attacks. The airport is considered a strategic location that could be targeted during military conflict.

Here's what Israel's PM had to say about it:

This incident marks the most significant engagement by Israel in the fighting that has been taking place in neighbouring Syria since 2011. Israel has mostly stayed out of the conflict so far, but has recently become more concerned about the increased Iranian presence along its border.

Australia updates RNP2 rules for foreign operators

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



The Australian CAA have said they will now allow foreign operators to use RNAV1/2 in lieu of RNP 1/2.

Over the past few years, Australia has been moving away from ground-based navigation to PBN/GNSS as the primary means of navigation across the country.

Australian operators have all had to be RNP1/2 compliant since May 2016, when they rolled-out RNP2 for en-route and RNP1 for terminal operations.

It's not yet mandatory for foreign operators to be RNP1/2 compliant – but if you want to benefit from these routes and procedures (and can't get RNP1/RNP2 approvals from your country of registry), you can notify CASA of your intent to use RNAV1/RNAV2 instead – and they will accept those as equivalent to RNP1/RNP2.

To do that, make sure you fulfil all the criteria in their “Acceptable Means of Compliance” (as contained in **CASA EX158/17**), fill out **Form 0667** and send it to CASA by email, along with a copy of your Ops Spec. Their email address is: **international_ops@casa.gov.au**

The AMC applies to both commercial and private flights. However, as it's not a mandatory requirement for foreign aircraft, if you're operating a private flight you might not want to bother with it; if you can't meet the equivalent of the RNP1/2 nav spec requirements, you can still operate in Australian airspace – all that will happen is that ATC just might not provide you with the absolute best routes and levels. But even that won't happen any time soon – at the moment there are still no RNP2 routes in Australia yet, although we will start seeing these being introduced between now and 2020.

For more info, check out the full AIC **here**.

Flight Planning:

- If you do have RNP2 – put **GRZ** in Field 10a and **NAV/RNP2** in Field 18.
- If you don't, then you must operate according to Australia's “Acceptable Means of Compliance” and put **RMK/CASA RNP AMC** in Field 18.

Tonga battered by Cyclone Gita

David Mumford

12 May, 2018

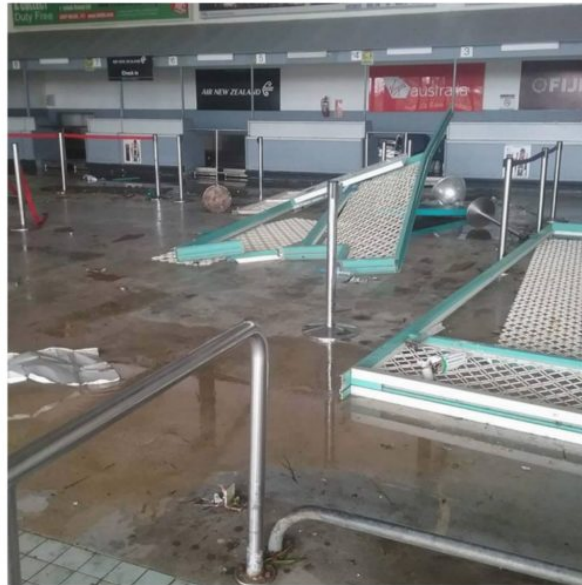


On Feb 14, operations resumed at Tonga's main international airport, NTF/Fua'amotu, after it was closed for 2 days for the passage of Tropical Cyclone Gita.

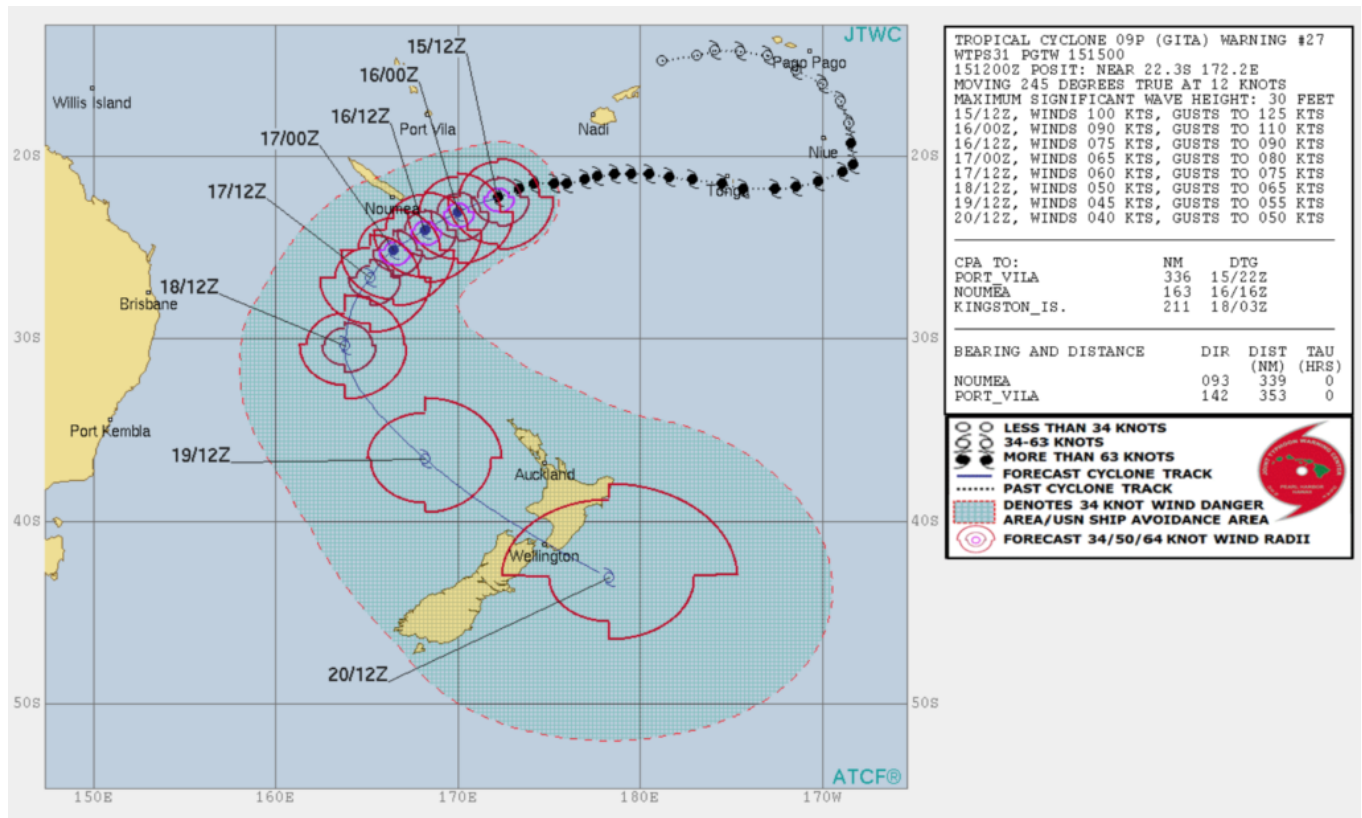
The cyclone caused extensive damage across Tonga, and the government has declared a state of emergency. According to the British Met office, Gita was the most powerful Cyclone to hit Tonga in over 60 years, battering the island nation with winds of over 120kts at its peak.

At least 30 people were reportedly injured during the storm, and around half the buildings suffered damage in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga. Roads across the main island of Tongatapu have been obstructed by storm wreckage and downed power lines, and widespread power outages have also been reported.

At the airport itself, the domestic terminal is still closed due to damage sustained in the storm, and now all domestic flights are using the international terminal instead. Here's some photos of the damage at the airport:

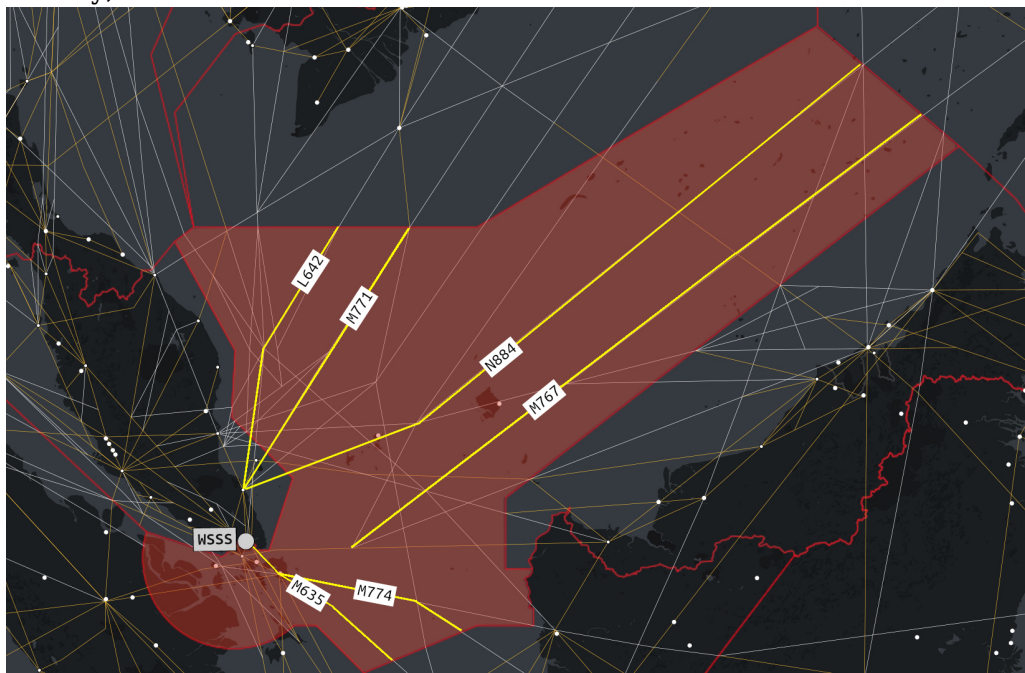


Gita has since moved westwards into open waters as the equivalent of a Category 4 hurricane, with winds of over 100kts, but it's now expected to head south-west across the ocean, narrowly avoiding direct hits on Vanuatu and New Caledonia – although heavy rain, strong winds and storm surge will affect these areas.



PBCS is coming to Singapore

David Mumford
 12 May, 2018



It's not only the North Atlantic that will be seeing PBCS being implemented on March 29th – on that same date, the weird acronym is coming to Singapore too!

However, the requirements for Singapore airspace are slightly different to that for crossing the NAT.

The short of it - compliant aircraft will be allowed a reduced separation of 50NM (or 10 minutes in trail) on certain airways: L642, M635, M767, M771, M774 and N884. For everyone else, it'll be 80NM (or 20 minutes in trail). For Singapore, 'compliant aircraft' basically means anything with RNP10, CPDLC and ADS-C capable of the RCP240 / RSP180 performance requirement.



You'll still need to obtain some kind of operator approval from your State of Registry. As we mentioned in our article on **PBCS on the NAT** - the best way to do that will probably be to submit an AFM Statement of Compliance for PBCS, showing exactly what data link communication systems your aircraft has, along with the selected performance.

For Singapore, if you want to operate on those airways at the reduced separation, here's what you'll need to remember to include in your ATC FPL:

In 10a:

J1	CPDLC ATN VDL Mode 2
J2	CPDLC FANS 1/A HF DL
J3	CPDLC FANS 1/A VDL Mode A
J4	CPDLC FANS 1/A VDL Mode 2
J5	CPDLC FANS 1/A SATCOM (INMARSAT)
J6	CPDLC FANS 1/A SATCOM (MTSAT)
J7	CPDLC FANS 1/A SATCOM (Iridium)
P1	CPDLC RCP 400
P2	CPDLC RCP 240
P3	SATVOICE RCP 400
P4-P9	Reserved for RCP

In 10b:

D1	ADS-C with FANS 1/A capabilities
G1	ADS-C with ATN capabilities

In Item 18:

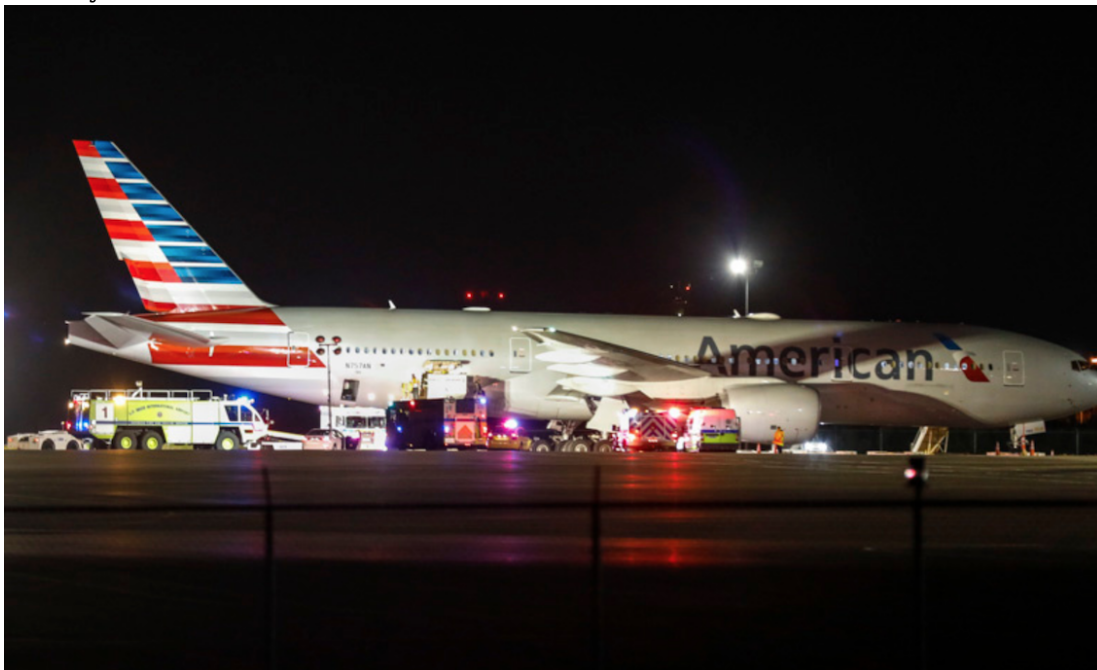
Make sure you include **SUR/RSP180** to show you're capable of the RSP180 performance requirement.

For more info, check out the full AIC published by Singapore **here**.

Do you use Bermuda (TXKF) as a NAT alternate at night?

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



The Bermuda AIP says that they have Fire Category 9 from 07-23 local time, but also that “during uncontrolled hours of operations BFRS/ARFF will be called out at CAT 9”.

So does this mean that Fire Category 9 is essentially ALWAYS available? And how long does it really take to call them out in an emergency?

We got an answer to that question the other day, when an American Airlines B777-200 en-route from KJFK/New York to SBGL/Rio de Janeiro had to make an emergency divert to TXKF/Bermuda due to a suspected fire in the cargo hold.

ATC cleared the flight direct to TXKF/Bermuda. They advised the crew that the tower at the airport was not staffed at the time (although the runway has pilot controlled runway lighting), but that emergency services had been alerted and would be on standby for their arrival.

38 minutes later, at 12.18 am, the flight landed, and the emergency services were indeed there as promised.

The whole cargo fire thing turned out to be a false alarm, although we're very thankful to one of the passengers-the supermodel Joan Smalls-for **documenting the ordeal on social media**.

We contacted the airport authority to check exactly how long they really need for emergency divers, and whether they really do provide Fire Cat 9 in these situations. Here is their response:

“ARFF is available 24hrs and yes will be staffed at the appropriate level to be cat 9 at all times. After 2300 Local Time when the local airport is uncontrolled , ARFF requires 20 minutes for call out for such events like diversions.”

So there you have it. You can always rely on Fire Cat 9 at TXKF – just make sure you give them at least 20 minutes notice!

Bangladesh is now one big ADIZ

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



Bangladesh has decided to establish an ADIZ over the entire country, including a massive chunk of airspace off their south coastline that actually extends over much of the adjoining Indian VECF/Kolkata FIR.

Aircraft intending to fly into, through, or within this new Bangladesh ADIZ must now obtain an ADC (Air Defence Clearance) number beforehand. Just file your flight plan, and they will send this to you by AFTN. Make sure you write it down – as they will ask you for it on HF before you enter their airspace.

If you don't have AFTN access, you can get the number by calling +880-2890-1081 or emailing **adnc@baf.mil.bd**

The authorities in Bangladesh have released a scary sounding AIP SUP on all this, which you can read in full **here**. What they fail to mention there, but **did** publish by Notam at the time, is that there are actually a bunch of airways over the ocean (P646, N895, M770, L524 and W112) where you won't have to get this ADC number, unless you deviate towards the landmass of Bangladesh.



Here's the Notam:

A0032/18 NOTAMN

Q) VGFR/QXXXX/IV/BO/AE/000/999/

A) VGFR B) 1802010001 C) PERM

E) THE FLW AMDT/UPDATES ARE BROUGHT TO THE AIP-SUPP 01/2018:

1. ACFT INTENDING TO OPR INTO, THROUGH OR WI BANGLADESH ADIZ SHALL OBTAIN ADC NR FM THE FLW CONTACT DETAILS.

TELEPHONE: +880 2 8901081

FAX : +880 2 8901081

E- MAIL: ADNC AT THE RATE OF BAF.MIL.BD

AFTN : VGHSZQZX

2. FLT OPR ON ATS RTE P646, N895, M770, L524 AND W112 SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN ADC NR UNLESS DEVIATED TOWARDS THE LAND MASS OF BANGLADESH.

3. GUARD FREQ. 121.50 MHZ SHALL NOT BE USED TO CTC THE AIR DEFENCE UNIT.

4. ARTICLE 'L' IN THE PROCEDURES FOR AIR DEFENCE CLEARANCE IN THE AIP-SUPP SHALL BE TREATED AS CNLD.

5. FOR THE TIME BEING DOMESTIC FLT AND FLT OF STATE ACFT AND GENERAL AVIATION ACFT OF BANGLADESH SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN ADC NUMBER

So you won't need an ADC number on those airways, but for everywhere else in that big red ice pick-shaped chunk of airspace, you'll need to get authorisation. As the Bangladesh AIS office politely warn in their AIC: "Aircraft flying without a valid ADC number or failing to comply with any restriction or deviating from flight plan will be **liable to interception** by Bangladesh Air Force Interceptor aircraft according to ICAO Standard Interception Procedure."

PBCS: New rule on the NAT from March 29, 2018 - RCP240 and RSP180

David Mumford
12 May, 2018



Update March 16th, 2018: PBCS is turning into a PITA. After OPSGROUP input, we have an update on the latest status including rumours of delays, A056 LOA's, and Aircraft that have failed to comply with PBCS.

For the **latest changes and updates on the North Atlantic**, including our most recent **Guides and Charts**, use our NAT reference page at **flightservicebureau.org/NAT**.

ICAO is introducing another acronym in the North Atlantic Region. This time, it's PBCS (Performance Based Communication and Surveillance), and from March 29th 2018 you will need to be compliant if you want to fly on the half-tracks between FL350-390.

Initially, there will only be a maximum of three daily tracks where you will need to be PBCS-compliant

between FL350-390. These will likely be the same tracks as we currently see being assigned as 'half-tracks' each day.

This requirement will eventually be extended to all the NAT tracks between FL350-390, but we understand that will only happen when the filing of PBCS designators on flight plans reaches the 90% mark, or 28th March 2019 – whichever comes first. Either way, the 'transition period' for this PBCS implementation is set to last six months, so the roll-out of the requirement to all the tracks won't happen until Oct 2018 at the earliest!

But from March 29th 2018, Shanwick and Gander will basically just continue the concept used in the RLatSM trial – whereby daily tracks spaced at less than 60nm from an adjacent track will be specified as a 'PBCS Track' and will be notified in the Track Message Remark-3.

So what is PBCS?

PBCS is the thing that will replace two trials in the NAT which are both coming to an end on March 29th:

- **RLAT – Reduced Lateral** Separation Minimum: where a reduced lateral separation of 25 nm has been implemented on the tracks between FL350-390 (so now there are extra "half tracks" each day, spaced by one-half degree of latitude)
- **RLong – Reduced Longitudinal** Separation Minimum: in the Shanwick Oceanic Control Area (OCA), longitudinal separation has been reduced to 5 minutes between aircraft following the same track.

When these trials end, PBCS standards will be introduced to continue to allow the application of both reduced lateral and longitudinal separation for aircraft that meet the Required Communication Performance (RCP) and Required Surveillance Performance (RSP) specifications.

How do I comply with PBCS standards?

To operate on the PBCS tracks between FL350-390, you will need to be RNP4 compliant, with CPDLC capable of RCP240, and ADS-C capable of RSP180.

But watch out! Some aircraft do have ADS-C and CPDLC but have never demonstrated RCP or RSP, and have no statement of compliance (e.g. most Honeywell Primus aircraft and several early Boeing aircraft). These aircraft may struggle to get approval to operate in PBCS airspace. Which brings us neatly on to...

Do I need PBCS approval from my state of registry?

PBCS approval will differ depending on which country operators are from.

For UK operators, check the requirements **here**.

US operators will need to update their LOA for Data Link Communications (A056). **The FAA have published a new guide**, which tells operators exactly what they need to do to get this authorisation, namely:

1. Submit an AFM Statement of Compliance for PBCS, showing exactly what data link communication systems your aircraft has, along with the selected performance
2. Since July 2016, various oceanic FIRs have been collecting data on whether certain aircraft meet RSP and RCP criteria. You need to make sure your aircraft isn't already listed as having failed to meet these criteria, by checking here:

What new codes do I need to put down on my flight plan?

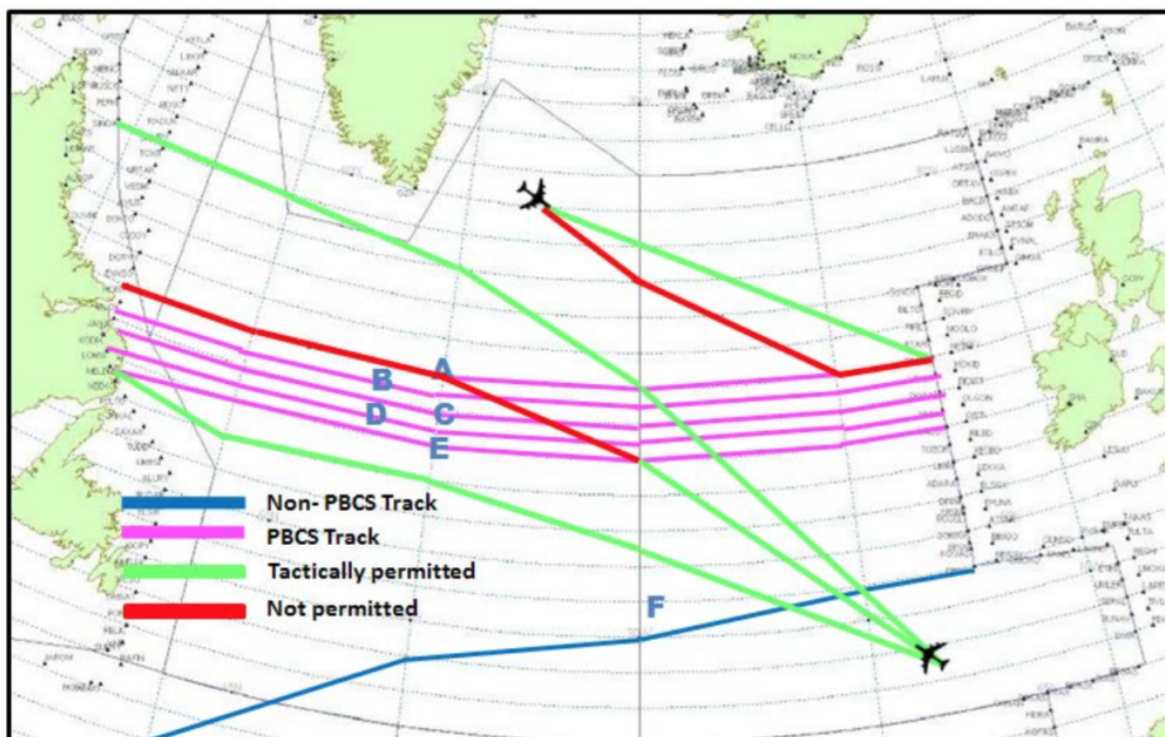
- FANS 1/A CPDLC equipped aircraft planning to operate in the NAT HLA shall insert the appropriate designator (J2, J3, J4, J5 and/or J7) in Item 10a of the flight plan.
- FANS 1/A CPDLC RCP 240 compliant aircraft intending to operate in the NAT HLA shall insert the designator P2 in Item 10a of the flight plan.
- FANS 1/A ADS-C compliant aircraft planning to operate in the NAT HLA shall insert the designator D1 in Item 10b of the flight plan.
- FANS 1/A ADS-C RSP 180 compliant aircraft planning to operate in the NAT HLA shall insert SUR/RSP180 in Item 18 of the flight plan.
- RNP 4 compliant aircraft planning to operate in the NAT HLA shall insert PBN/L1 in Item 18 of the flight plan.

If I'm not eligible for PBCS, where can I go?

ATC may allow you to do either of the following, depending on how stressed/busy they are (i.e. decided on a 'tactical basis'):

- You can infringe on the daily PBCS tracks between FL350 - FL390 at only one point (including Oceanic Entry/Exit Point) i.e. cross but not join an NAT PBCS track
- You can climb or descend through levels FL350 - FL390 on a PBCS track provided the climb or descent is continuous.

In their **NAT OPS Bulletin 2018_001**, ICAO have published a handy little picture to demonstrate this:



Further information:

- For a great FAQ on all things PBCS, check out the latest FAA document **here**.
- For more info on the PBCS implementation, check out the full UK AIC **here**.
- To figure out where you are welcome on the NAT, depending on what equipment and training you have, check out our quick reference guide **here**.
- *Special thanks go to Mitch Launius at 30westip.com for help with this post. For assistance with international procedures training for business aviation crews worldwide, and to watch an excellent webinar about all things PBCS-related, check out the **30westip**.*

Beijing bans charter flights

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



ZBAA/Beijing airport authorities have said the airport is now so busy, they will not accept any new requests for charter flights between now and Mar 31, at the earliest.

No official document has been published on this yet, and the authorities have said it will not be published on the Notams either – but the new rule is already in effect.

For GA flights, the same rules apply as usual: maximum 24hrs parking, no ops allowed from 23-01z, and an aircraft cannot have two peak hour slots between 01-14z during one day. Many operators choose to go to ZBTJ/Tianjin instead, or ferry there for parking.

For more information on ops to China, download our Lowdown guide by clicking the image below:



A319, A330 hit by gunfire at Tripoli

David Mumford

12 May, 2018



Heavy clashes broke out in the Libyan capital Tripoli on Jan 15, leaving at least twenty people dead and forcing HLLM/Mitiga airport to close for five days, re-opening again on Jan 20.

Gunfire at the airport damaged multiple aircraft, including a few A319s and at least one A330.

Here are some photos of some of the damage:



Both airports in Tripoli are focal points for fighting. Given their strategic value, they periodically serve as headquarters for various local militias.

HLLT/Tripoli has been more or less completely closed since mid-2014, when at least 90% of the airport's facilities were destroyed in fighting between local militias. Since then, international flights to and from Tripoli have been using HLLM/Mitiga instead. Technically, HLLT/Tripoli is now only available for VIP, emergency and ambulance flights; but in reality, it should be avoided at all costs.

HLLM/Mitiga is the old military airfield, which is now being used for civilian traffic, since the closure of HLLT/Tripoli. However, the airport has been plagued by violence over the past few years, and has been forced to close a number of times.

Back in July 2017, we reported on the **intense fighting that took place at Mitiga airport where 5 people were killed and 32 injured**, and then on 19 Oct 2017, a Libyan Airlines A330 at the airport was hit by gunfire during an exchange of fire between local militia in the district directly south of the airport.



A number of countries already have blanket warnings in place against operating to Libya, and they all say pretty much the same thing: avoid the entire country - don't land at any airport, don't even overfly.

So we suggest you ignore whatever gets pumped out on the HLLL FIR Notams about airports being "AVAILABLE H24 FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND EN-ROUTE DIVERSIONS". (You can read that nonsense in full by clicking [here](#).)

Libya remains categorised as a Level One country (Do Not Fly) at safeairspace.net

