Bizav Roadblock: Turkey and Armenia

OPSGROUP Team
29 October, 2024

UPDATE 30 Oct 2024:

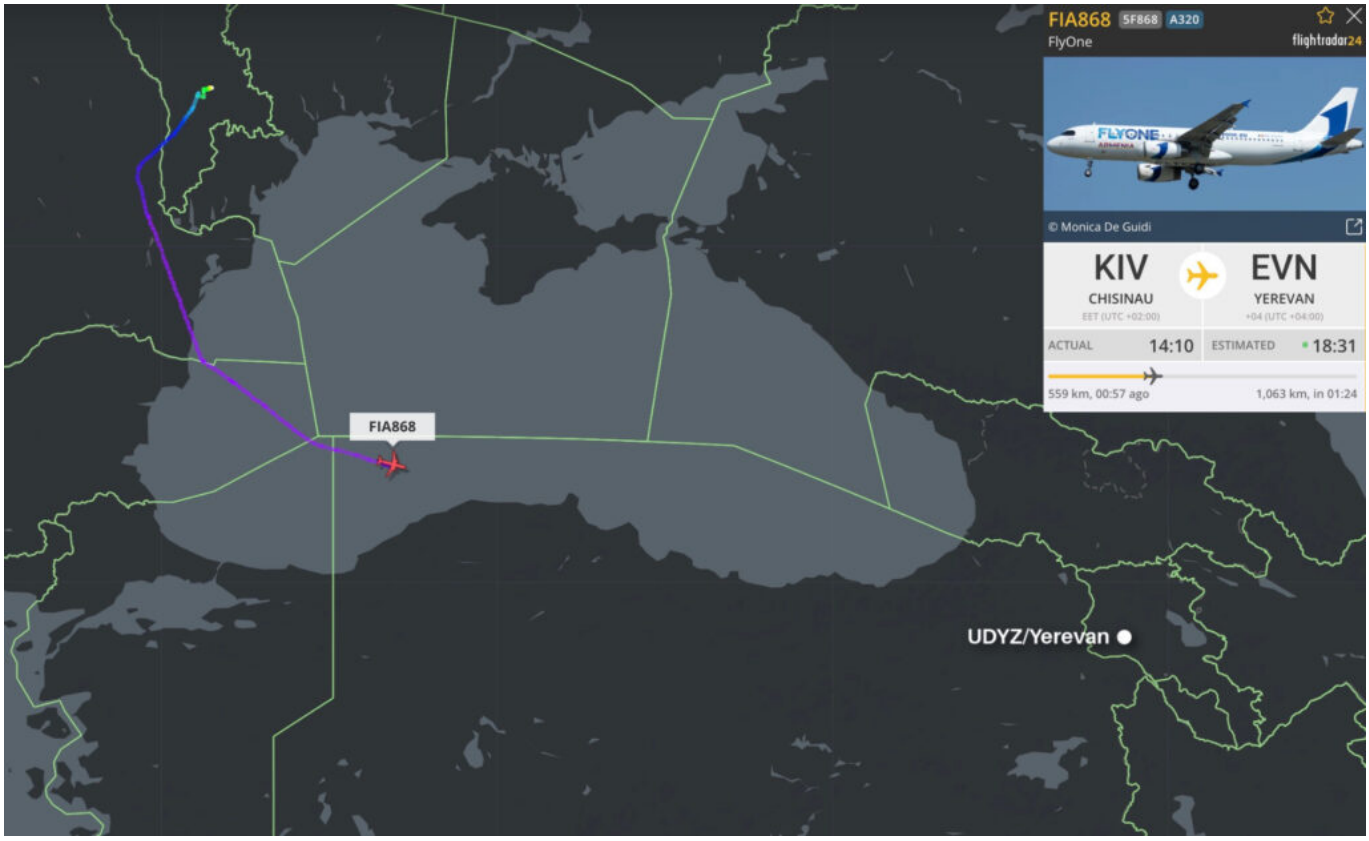
- **Turkey has reportedly started allowing bizav overflights heading to/from Armenia.**
- **This issue stretches back to May 2023, but Turkey dropped the restriction in Sep 2024.**
- **So if you're heading to Armenia (UDYZ/Yerevan, for example), you can now overfly Turkey – you no longer have to route around the country or make a stop somewhere like UGTB/Tbilisi in Georgia.**

Turkish Ban

Back in May 2023, Armenian airline FlyOne operating a Paris-Yerevan flight had to make an emergency landing in Chisinau after being **denied entry to Turkish airspace.**

Turkey reportedly applied this **last-minute ban** in response to a monument erected in Yerevan the previous week, which they were unhappy about.

Pretty soon after, FlyOne evidently managed to resume Turkey overflights, but it seems that this restriction was **still informally applied to bizav overflight requests.**



30 Oct 2023: FlyOne from Chisinau to Yerevan merrily overflying Turkish airspace again.

OPSGROUP Member Reports

There was no Notam published on this issue, nor anything mentioned in the Turkish AIP. But some operators made **tech-stops in Georgia** to fix the problem. In Oct 2023, two **Airport Spy reports** were received from OPSGROUP members, where they required a tech-stop at **UGTB/Tibilisi (Georgia)** before continuing on to **UDYZ/Yerevan (Armenia)** in order to overfly Turkish airspace:

Airport Spy

Tbilisi, Georgia

★★★★☆ Rated 4 from 3 reviews

Large International Airport | Longest Rwy: **3,000 m / 9,840 ft** (13R/31L) | Elev: 1624

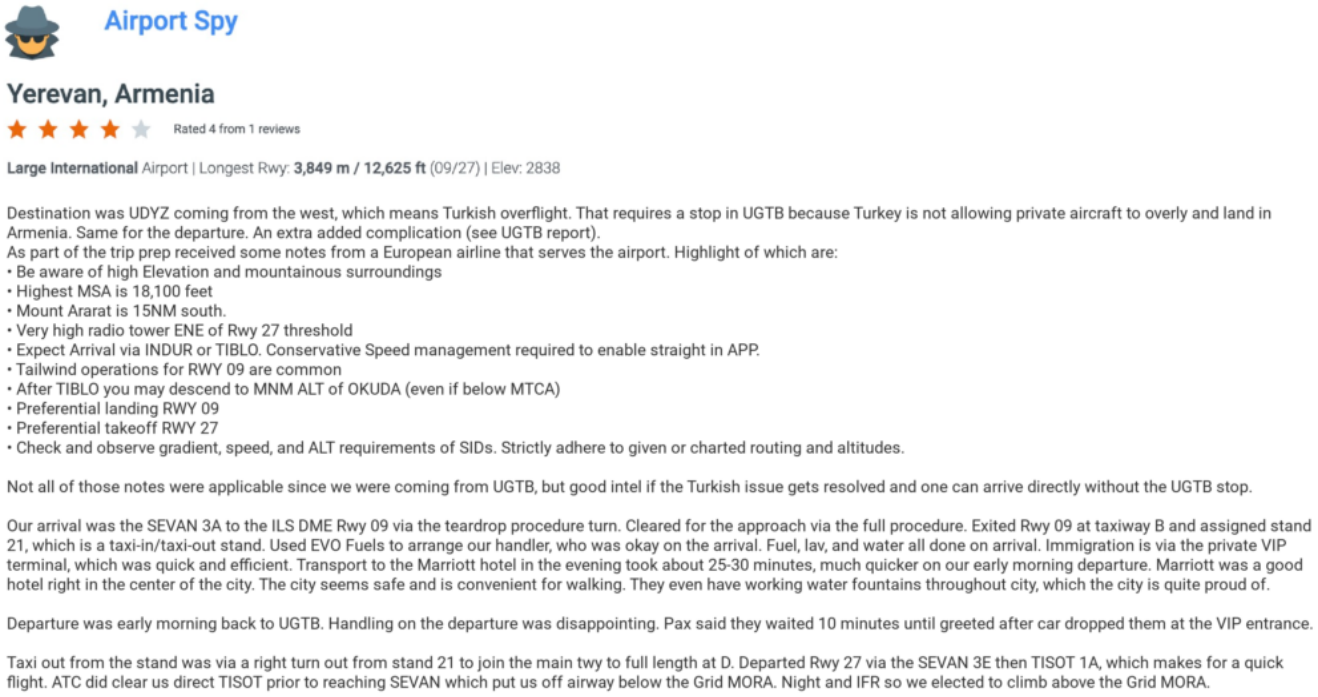
This was a necessary stop enroute to UDYZ. Turkey does not allow private aircraft to overfly their airspace to land in Armenia, so a "tech stop" in UGTB is the easiest way to get around that restriction. Handler chosen via EVO fuels operations due to their eastern European connections.

Inbound to UGTB starting in the Istanbul FIR and the entire Ankara FIR we had GPS jamming. We were prepared for this given the FIR NOTAMs and OpsGroup reports. It was a non-event with the system using DME-DME or IRS throughout the term of GPS outage. GPS started working again right on the Tbilisi FIR border at fix NOLGA.

Arrival was the LAGAS 1A to an ILS Z Rwy 31L. ATC cleared us for the approach via the STAR fairly early. Good notes on the chart about the military airport which you will see first just under the approach course. Runway was not as rough as we were expecting based on previous reports. Exited via Taxiway A and met by follow-me car. Taxied to spot 10D, which is a taxi-in/taxi-out stand. Fuel truck waiting. Fueling allowed with pax onboard with fire services standing by. Pax were allowed out on the ramp during fueling in the shadow of the airplane to stretch their legs. With fueling included total turn time was 44 minutes.

Departure was taxi out with follow me again. They take you all the way to the runway at taxiway A. Back track and line-up on Rwy 31L. Departure via the TAVRO 1E.
Coming back out of UDYZ was similar experience with slightly different STAR and SID. No fuel or services required for the second stop, but they still make you park and open your door as part of the requirements for the Turkish "cleansing". Turn time was 26 minutes. Could have been faster, but that was our issue, not theirs. Departure from Tbilisi airspace was via Fix ROLIN. GPS outage started in the Tbilisi FIR and continued until 40 miles east of LTBA.

All in all, this was an easy airport with reasonable ATC service.



Airport Spy

Yerevan, Armenia

Rated 4 from 1 reviews

Large International Airport | Longest Rwy: **3,849 m / 12,625 ft** (09/27) | Elev: 2838

Destination was UDYZ coming from the west, which means Turkish overflight. That requires a stop in UGTB because Turkey is not allowing private aircraft to overly and land in Armenia. Same for the departure. An extra added complication (see UGTB report).
As part of the trip prep received some notes from a European airline that serves the airport. Highlight of which are:
• Be aware of high Elevation and mountainous surroundings
• Highest MSA is 18,100 feet
• Mount Ararat is 15NM south.
• Very high radio tower ENE of Rwy 27 threshold
• Expect Arrival via INDUR or TIBLO. Conservative Speed management required to enable straight in APP.
• Tailwind operations for RWY 09 are common
• After TIBLO you may descend to MNM ALT of OKUDA (even if below MTCA)
• Preferential landing RWY 09
• Preferential takeoff RWY 27
• Check and observe gradient, speed, and ALT requirements of SIDs. Strictly adhere to given or charted routing and altitudes.

Not all of those notes were applicable since we were coming from UGTB, but good intel if the Turkish issue gets resolved and one can arrive directly without the UGTB stop.

Our arrival was the SEVAN 3A to the ILS DME Rwy 09 via the teardrop procedure turn. Cleared for the approach via the full procedure. Exited Rwy 09 at taxiway B and assigned stand 21, which is a taxi-in/taxi-out stand. Used EVO Fuels to arrange our handler, who was okay on the arrival. Fuel, lav, and water all done on arrival. Immigration is via the private VIP terminal, which was quick and efficient. Transport to the Marriott hotel in the evening took about 25-30 minutes, much quicker on our early morning departure. Marriott was a good hotel right in the center of the city. The city seems safe and is convenient for walking. They even have working water fountains throughout city, which the city is quite proud of.

Departure was early morning back to UGTB. Handling on the departure was disappointing. Pax said they waited 10 minutes until greeted after car dropped them at the VIP entrance.

Taxi out from the stand was via a right turn out from stand 21 to join the main twy to full length at D. Departed Rwy 27 via the SEVAN 3E then TISOT 1A, which makes for a quick flight. ATC did clear us direct TISOT prior to reaching SEVAN which put us off airway below the Grid MORA. Night and IFR so we elected to climb above the Grid MORA.

Spy Reports

If you have managed to get a Turkey overflight permit for a flight heading to/from Armenia, please let us know! You can also reach us directly on news@ops.group, or file an Airport Spy report.

OPSGROUP members can access the **full Airport Spy database** via the members dashboard here.

Turkey or Türkiye?

Just a final note on this… In June 2022, the United Nations agreed to a formal request to recognise Turkey as “Türkiye”, as part of a rebranding campaign launched by the Turkish president.

However, no major media outlets have changed their spelling so far. **So for now at least, Turkey remains Turkey.**