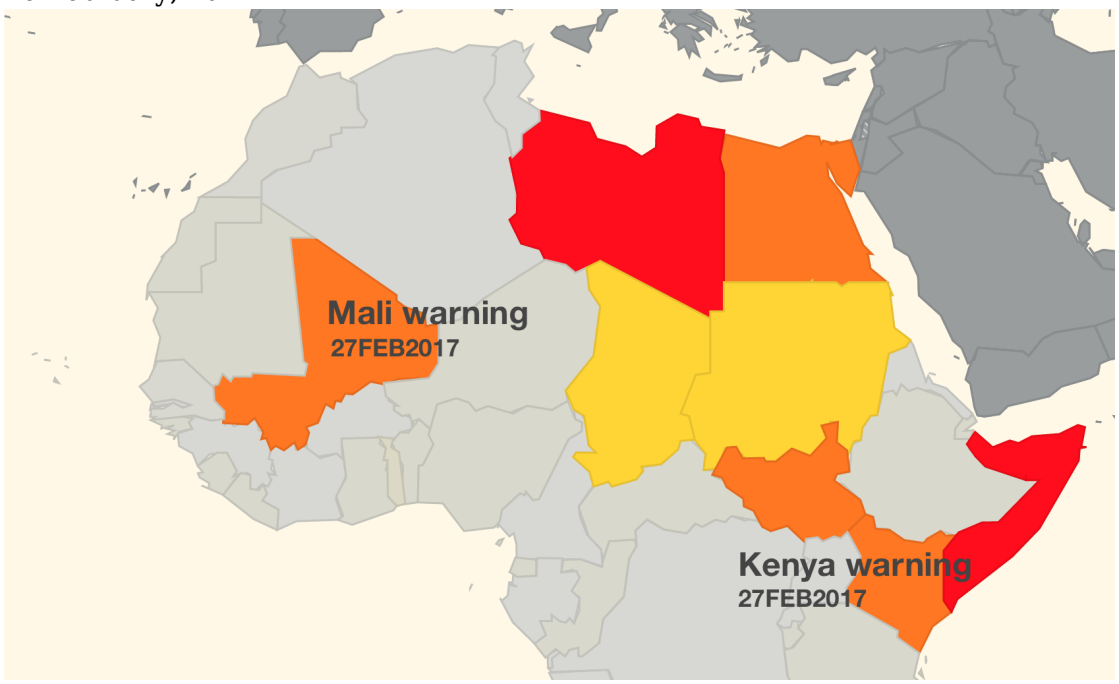
Fresh warnings as FAA clarifies weapons risk in Kenya, Mali airspace

Declan Selleck
26 February, 2017



Feb 27th, 2017: The FAA has issued fresh warnings for Kenyan and Malian airspace, warning US operators of the potential dangers in operating through both the Nairobi and Malian FIR's.

Published on Feb 26th, the new advice **also adds new language with clarification of 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 FAA uses the same wording for both Kenya and Mali. Additionally for **Mali**, the Algerian CAA has concurrently published airspace closures along their southern border due to the conflict, and the FAA's background notes on the Mali conflict still stand.

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 Notams both use FL260 as the minimum safe level, though we would suggest, as usual, that a higher level closer to FL300 is more sensible.

These updates have been notified through SafeAirspace.net, a collaborative and information sharing tool used by airlines, business jet operators, state agencies, military, and private members of OPSGROUP.

This is the new wording in the latest FAA Notams on Mali and Kenya:

```
POSSIBILITY OF ATTACKS ON CIVIL AVIATION BY EXTREMISTS/MILITANTS.
AIRCRAFT MAY ENCOUNTER FIRE FROM SMALL ARMS; INDIRECT FIRE WEAPONS,
SUCH AS MORTARS AND ROCKETS; AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT CAPABLE WEAPONS,
INCLUDING MAN-PORTABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS (MANPADS).SUCH WEAPONS
COULD TARGET AIRCRAFT AT LOW ALTITUDES, INCLUDING DURING THE ARRIVAL
AND DEPARTURE PHASES OF FLIGHT, AND/OR AIRPORTS AND AIRCRAFT ON THE
GROUND.
```

The NOTAMs in full are on our Kenya and Mali pages respectively.

References:

- Kenya country information page at safeairspace.net
- Mali country information page at safeairspace.net
- OPSGROUP collaborative project