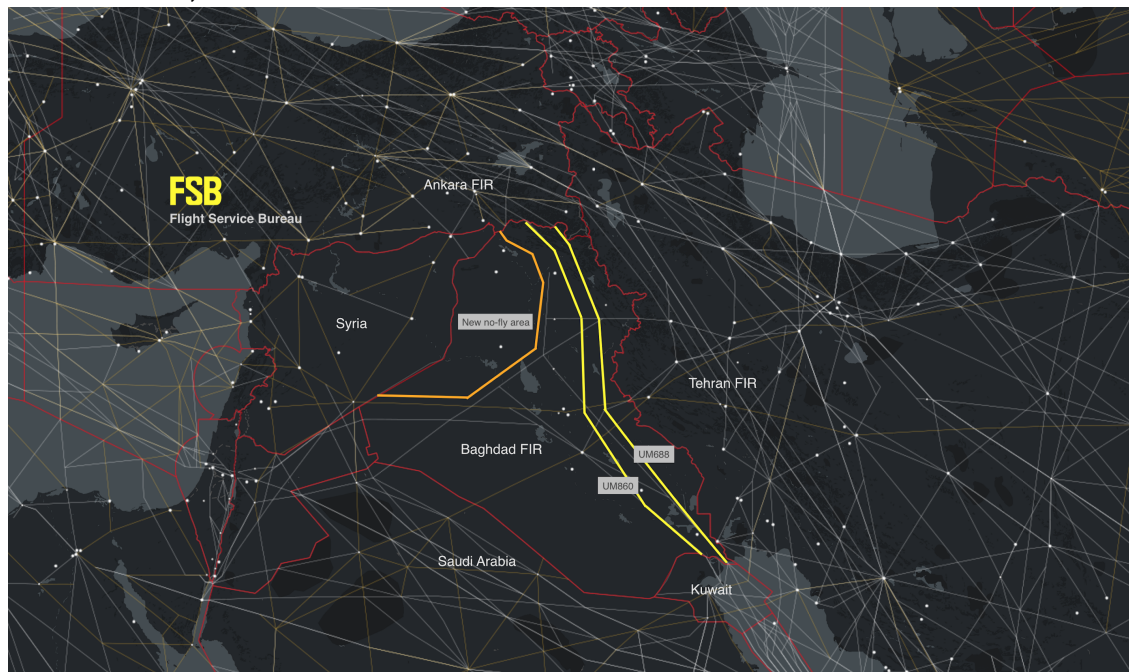


International airlines resume Iraq overflights, airspace reopens today

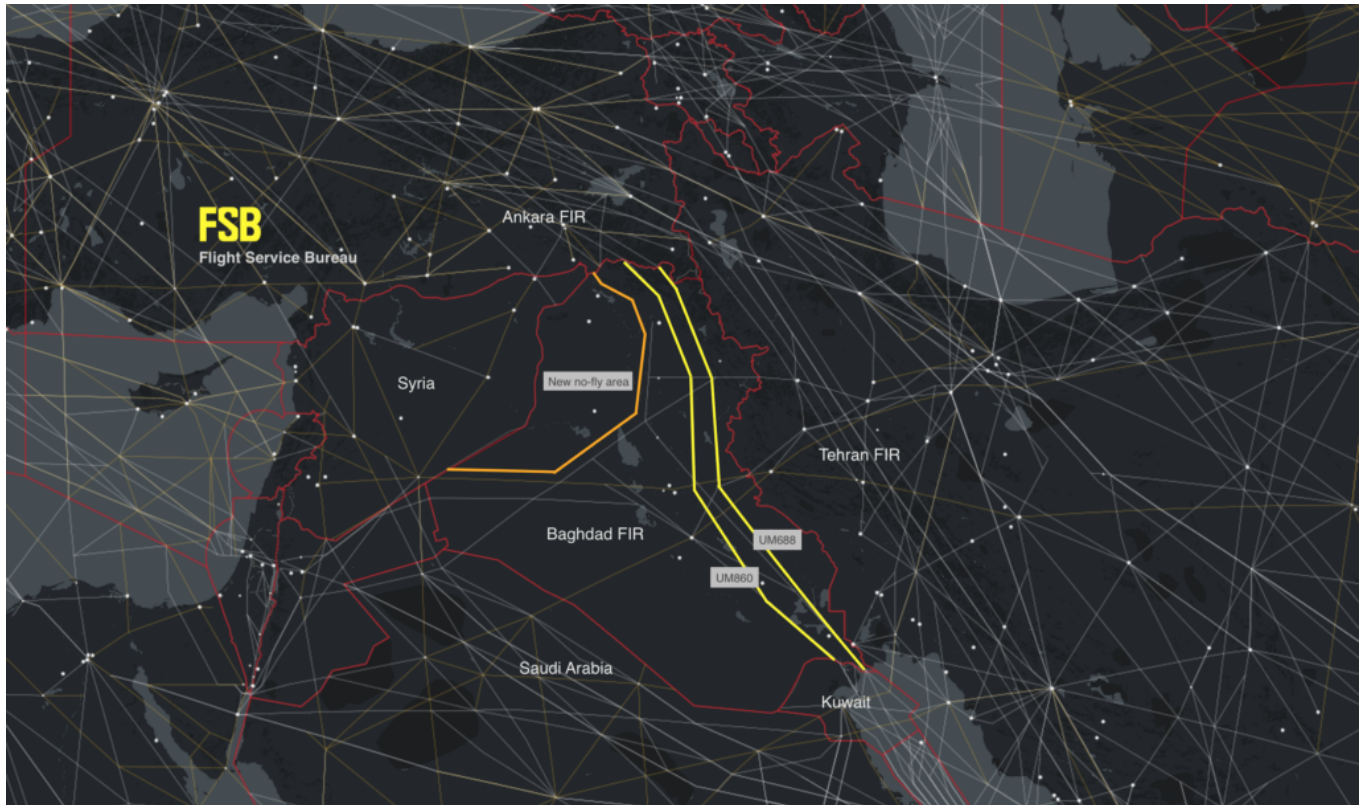
Declan Selleck
26 November, 2017



Emirates will be the first international airline to resume overflights of Iraq, with the first flights through the Baghdad FIR expected today, Monday Nov 27. According to FSB sources, effective 0001Z this morning the GCAA will authorize UAE based airlines to use this airspace, after several years of restrictions. Emirates anticipates that about 150 flights a day will now route via Iraq, rather than having to take longer routes via Saudi Arabia or Iran.

This is the first in several steps we expect will lead to almost full resumption of overflights over Iraq, meaning operators will have shorter routes through the Middle East available once again.

The next step will be for the **FAA to authorise US carriers to overfly Iraq - most likely at FL260 or above**. That approval was initially slated for the end of October, but was held back after events on the ground posed a security concern for UM860 and UM688 - the two main routes through the Baghdad FIR to Europe and vv.



The FAA were about to hit 'publish' on a Notam which would have enabled US airlines to start overflying Iraq again. The text of this Notam included:

- An amendment to the existing Iraq restriction
- **An authorisation for US airlines and operators to overfly Iraq at or above FL260**

But then, a military operation by Iraqi forces to take control of Kirkuk from the Kurds the same day, created concern as to overflight safety. **Kirkuk sits pretty much underneath the UM860 airway** on the map above.

For now, only UAE carriers have been given the green light for Iraq. Other operators and authorities are likely to follow suit soon.

See also:

- 12 October 2017, "Iraq Airspace to re-open for overflights"
- 19 October 2017, "Baghdad FIR reopening, but wait a little"