Mayhem in Mexico: Airports Closed Amid Cartel Violence

OPSGROUP Team
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There were violent clashes between cartel members and security forces in Culiacan on Jan 5, after the arrest of a son of notorious drug kingpin “El Chapo”. Further clashes were reported throughout Sinoloa state in response – cartel members set up road blocks, set fire to vehicles and **attacked a local airport, where two planes were hit by gunfire.**

Airport closures

Several airports in the region were forced to close:

MMCL/Culiacan – during the clashes on Jan 5, an Aeroméxico E190 was hit by gunfire on departure here, resulting in an aborted takeoff. One bullet hit the tail of the aircraft.

Elsewhere in Sinaloa, other airports remain closed on Jan 6 – **MMMZ/Mazatlan, MMCN/Ciudad Obregon, and MMLM/Los Michos.**

All airports have now re-opened, but operators should continue to be cautious. It is recommended to pre-arrange transportation and hotels, and check that routes are not affected by any airspace closures.

Mexico overview

Up until now safety and security issues have been relatively few and far between for Mexico.

The following alerts are currently active **(Jan 2023):**

- **MMUN/Cancun** If you are a GA operator heading to Cancun then keep an eye on notams restricting when you can operate there. A0064/23 and A0065/22 are currently active, with restrictions on Jan 7 and 8. **Issued Jan 04, 2023**
- **MMTO/Toluca** There's a new form that all passengers and crew of international flights need to fill out before arrival at MMTO/Toluca. It's fairly standard stuff – just health screening. **Issued Jan 02, 2023**
- **MMZZ/Mexico** Local agents have reported that operators should expect increased ramp checks at Mexican airports through to Jan 20. Check our article for a list of everything you should carry on board for trips to Mexico in case you get ramp checked. **Issued Dec 22 2022**
- **MMZZ/Mexico** Mexico has scrapped daylight saving time (DST) in most parts of the country, which means that clocks won't change come April. Standard time will apply all year round, apart from in the municipalities that border the US – these will continue to observe it. **Issued Dec 06, 2022**
- **MMZZ/Mexico** Fifteen Mexican airports have changed their fuel from Jet A1 to Jet A (actually it happened back in March but we didn't spot it until now). The list includes some big international airports – MMMY/Monterrey, MMPR/Puerto Vallarta, MMCL/Culiacan, and a few more. The main difference is the freezing point (minus 40 degC for Jet A). So check what you're filling up with. **Issued Oct 20, 2022**
- **MMMX/Mexico City** A near-miss and last minute go-around at the airport on May 7 follows a series of other events which have caused concerns over safety standards at the airport. Many of these are attributed to the recent opening MMSM/Felipe Angeles airport leading to increased airspace complexity. The government plan to reduce capacity at MMMX/Mexico City over the next few months to improve the situation. **Issued May 11, 2022**

Do you have any further information?

Please contact us at team@ops.group if you have any more information on the current situation in Mexico.