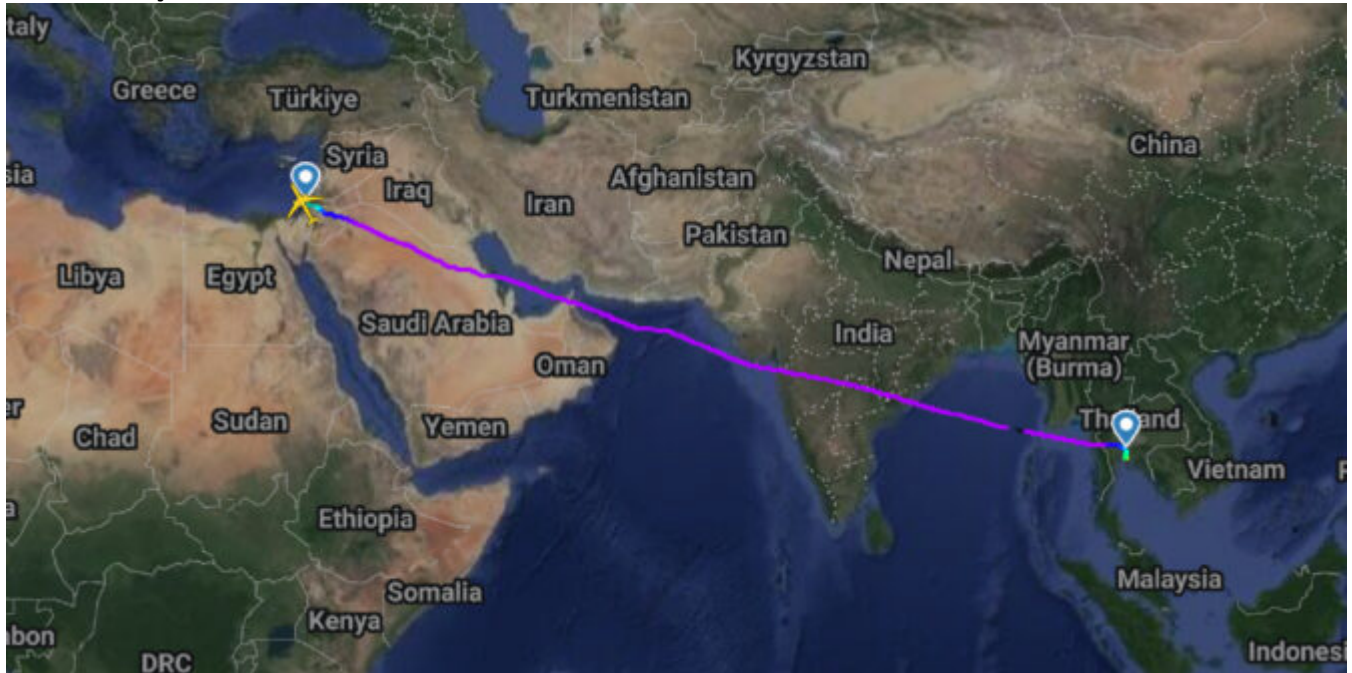


Oman opens to Israel

OPSGROUP Team

27 February, 2023



Some good news! Oman has become the latest Middle Eastern state to **allow overflights of Israeli registered aircraft**. It joins Saudi Arabia, and creates room for a significant air corridor to and from Asia since Israeli carriers still cannot overfly Iranian airspace – previously requiring them to route much further south.

On Feb 26, El Al flight 871 from Tel Aviv to Bangkok became the first Israeli aircraft to transit Oman's airspace! The journey, which previously took over 10 hours, lasted just under 8 hours.

Let's recap

2016 - Israel signed up to the 'Eurocontrol Comprehensive Agreement' reducing the multistep messiness of trying to fly from Europe to /through Israel.

Flights that transit Europe from Israel were required to file at least 3 hours in advance to the Tel Aviv Coordination Centre, who then liaised with Eurocontrol to verify that the routing was RAD compliant. Then everyone would make changes that would work their way back to the operator and it took ages and was complicated.

Now it is much easier.

2020 - Israel started allowing international flights to use their airspace.

This meant a big shortening of flight times for a lot of folk operating between Europe and the Middle East because they could go via Jordan and potentially Saudi, rather than having to take the long way around via Iraq and Iran and across Turkey.

Basically, they got a little friendlier with their neighbours, and in return their neighbours also started allowing Israeli aircraft in and out.

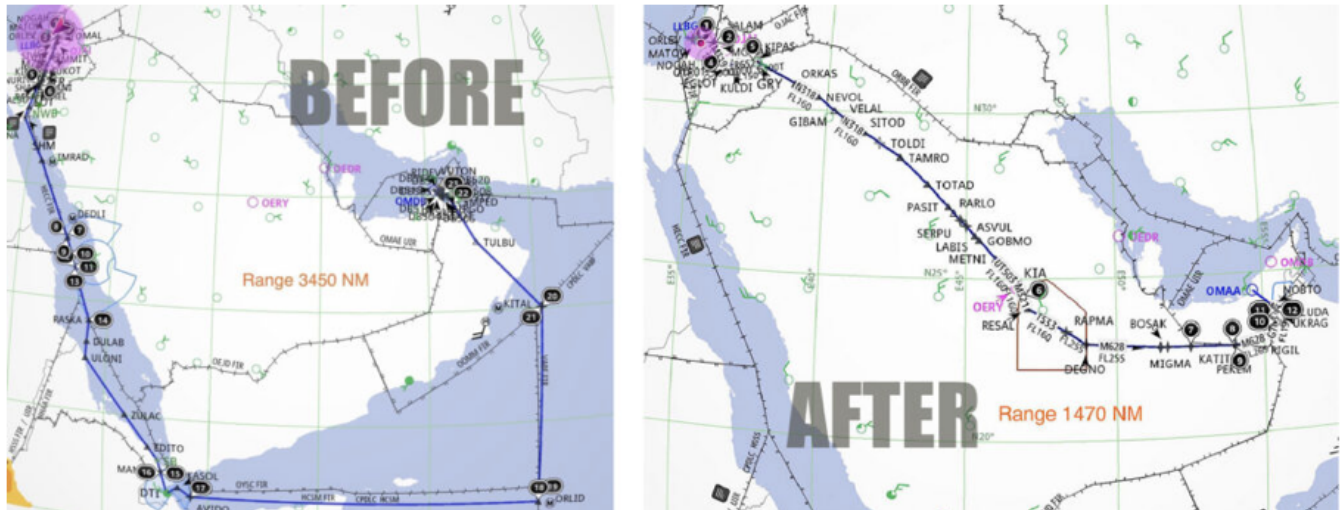
Also 2020 - The UAE and Israel signed a new agreement allowing Israeli flights to the UAE and vice versa.

But then, also, in 2020 - We got confused because flights could overfly Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel **regardless of destination**, but you have to be departing from one of the airports on Israel's approved list for them to give you an overflight permit (or, indeed, a landing permit).

Let me say that again, more clearly. **To overfly or land in Israel, you have to be departing from an airport they approve of.**

In 2022 - Actually, still in 2020, but we posted this in 2022 - if you want to fly to Israel, via Saudi airspace, then you can only do so if departing from the UAE or Bahrain.

July 2022 - Saudi announced they would open their airspace to everyone, essentially allowing folk to fly to Israel regardless of where they were coming from. This has been delayed though...



Israel Stuff

Israel open their airspace at specific times and... you know what, read this. It has all the routing and permit info in it already.

There are still some sticky restrictions for Israeli aircraft, (and if you are operating with a lot of Israeli's onboard) because a fair few countries still don't allow flight to/from Israel and ban direct flights and overflights if the traffic is coming from or heading to Israel.

On our last check in 2018, we spotted these ones: **Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen**

And we can now cross Oman off too!

Oman Stuff

Oman has said that all airlines could now overfly their territory, creating a nice little corridor joining with Saudi Arabia... which means the delayed Saudi agreement is also going to go full force.

The Saudi corridor extends over Oman's territory for easterly routes so until they gave the thumbs up, it couldn't happen.

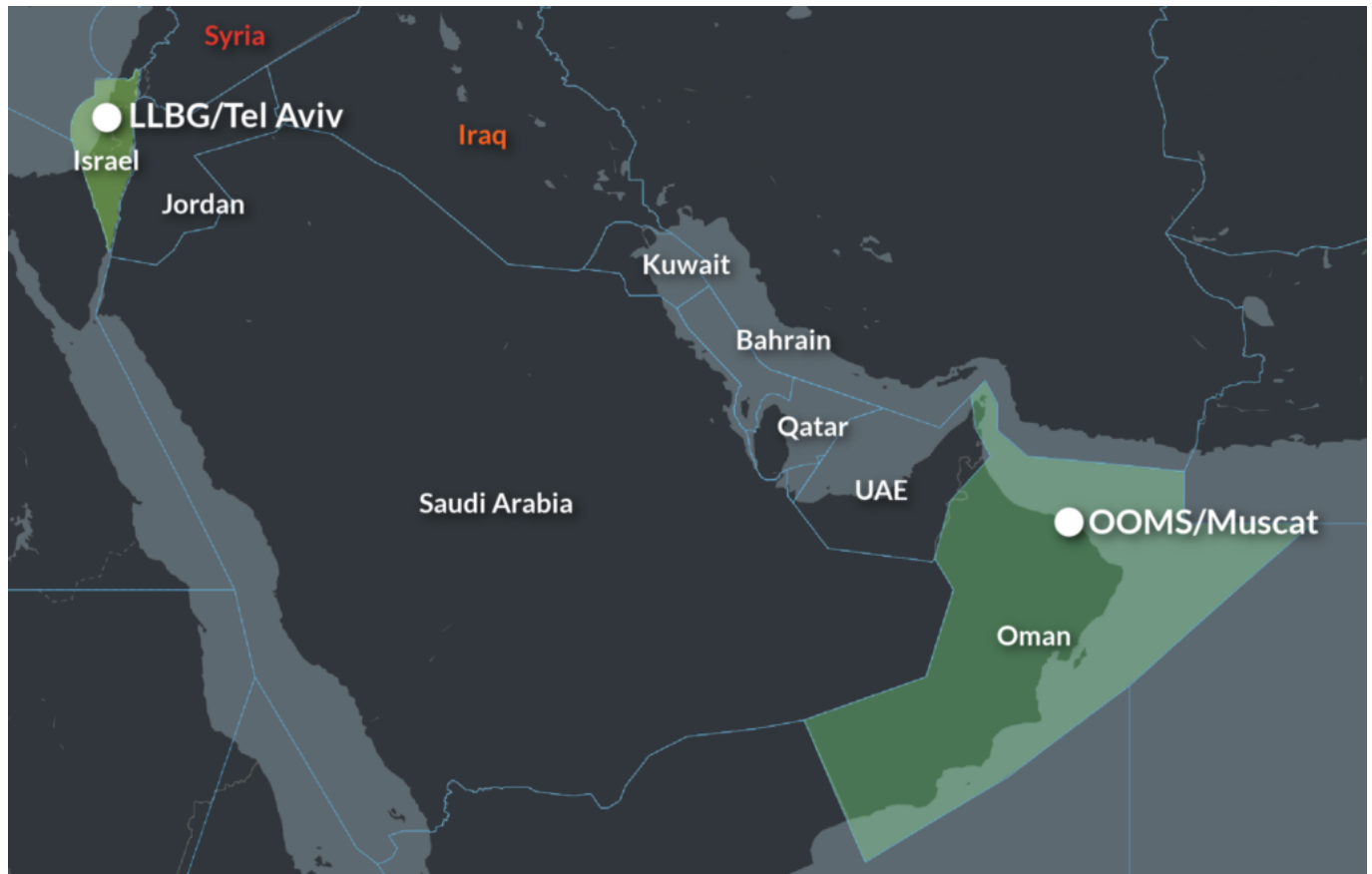
Someone in the US (because they're helping the deal go through) said - *"For the first time in history, passengers flying to and from Israel will now be able to travel on direct routes between Israel, Asia and points in between."*

And then someone in Oman's CAA said – *“Enforcing international and local requirements against discrimination in dealing with civilian aircraft, the Civil Aviation Authority confirms that the sultanate’s airspace is open to all carriers that meet the requirements of overflying.”*

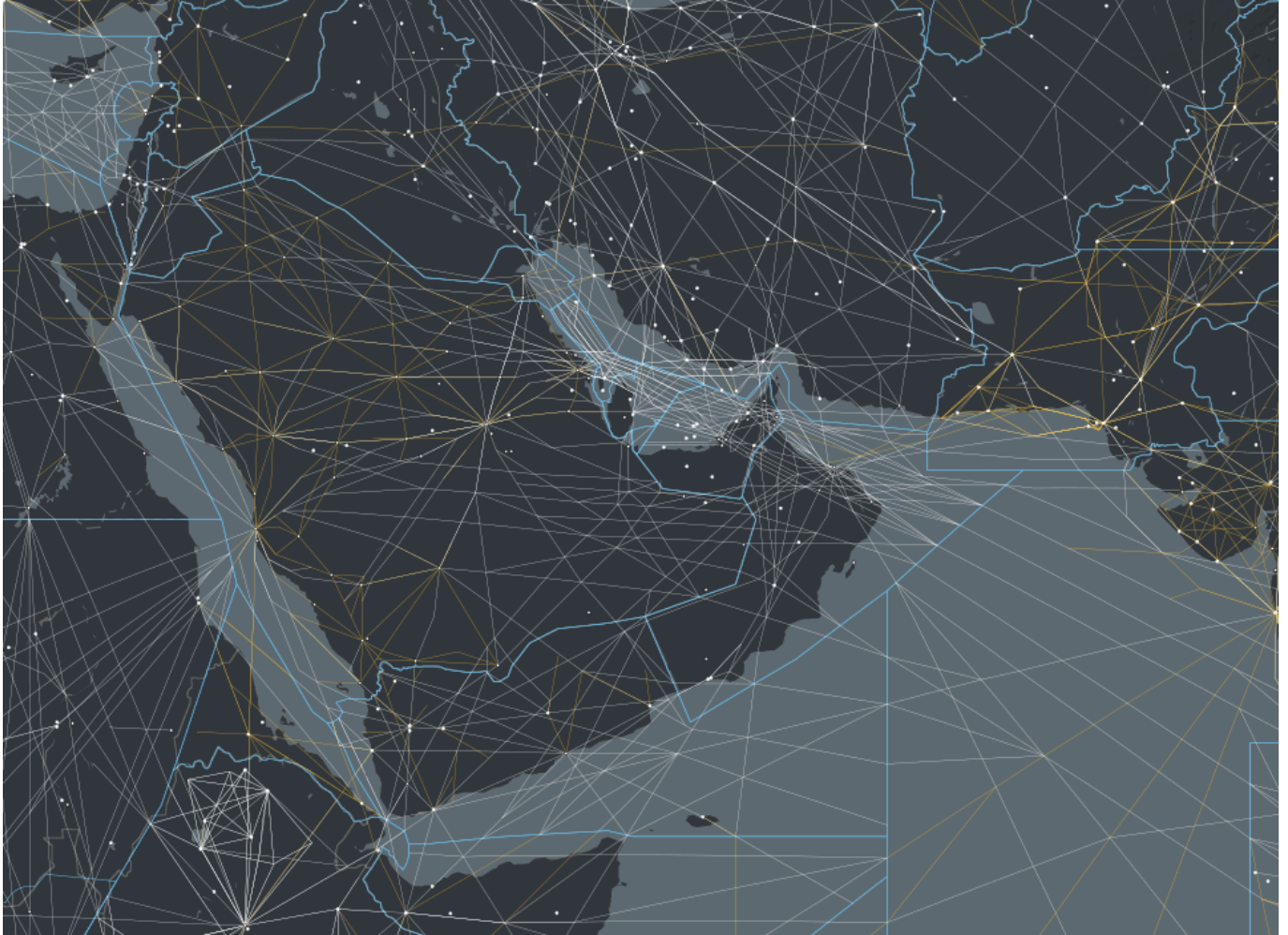
And then someone in OPSGROUP said – *“Well done everyone! Now, what does this all look like on a map?”*

A Map

Before we get to the map, we do know that this will shorten the flight time between Israel and Asia by more than 2 hours.



With Yemen unavailable, Oman was a bit of a blocker there for anyone trying to come and go from anything further east...



A more useful one possibly.

So, good news for the region and good news for folk hoping to fly through it, in it and (not) around it.