Ops in Indonesia: Is it safe?

OPSGROUP Team
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We last took a closer look at Indonesia back in 2021 and said *"It's fine at the big airports, but watch out on the ground at the smaller ones."*

Nearly two years on and we thought it might be a good time to take another look and see if the situation has changed…

What's happened in two years?

The security situation in the Papua region of Indonesia has worsened, with numerous reports of ground incidents at smaller, rural airports in the area.

- **11 March 2023:** An armed group targeted a passenger airport operating at WAVD/Dekai airport, wounding one passenger as it took off. Several operators have suspended operations to this airport since then.
- **8 March 2023:** An armed group opened fired at WAYB/Bilorai airport. One plane on the ground was hit and another diverted.
- **March 2023:** A landing aircraft at WAJO/Oksibil was shot at, a cargo aircraft was set alight on the ground in a separate incident.
- **February 2023:** A foreign pilot flying for Susi Air was kidnapped.
- **June 2022:** An armed group shot at an aircraft as it landed into Kenyam Airport.

On top of these security incidents we have heard of protests over fuel shortages and many, many volcano issues.

What are the official warnings?

IFALPA issued a security alert for commercial operations in the Papua region in March 2023. The alert advises that the Papua region is considered a **'high security risk area',** and that operations over mountainous and rural regions are strongly cautioned against.

The Indonesian Government has declared the entire region high risk, and **armed groups have shown continued interest in targeting aviation interests.** The official advice is a security assessment for each flight, along with limiting time spent on the ground.

A full briefing on the political and security situation on the ground in Indonesia, particularly with regards the Papua region conflict, can be found here. **The majority of Indonesia is considered low risk** – increased volatility is primarily in the Papua region only.

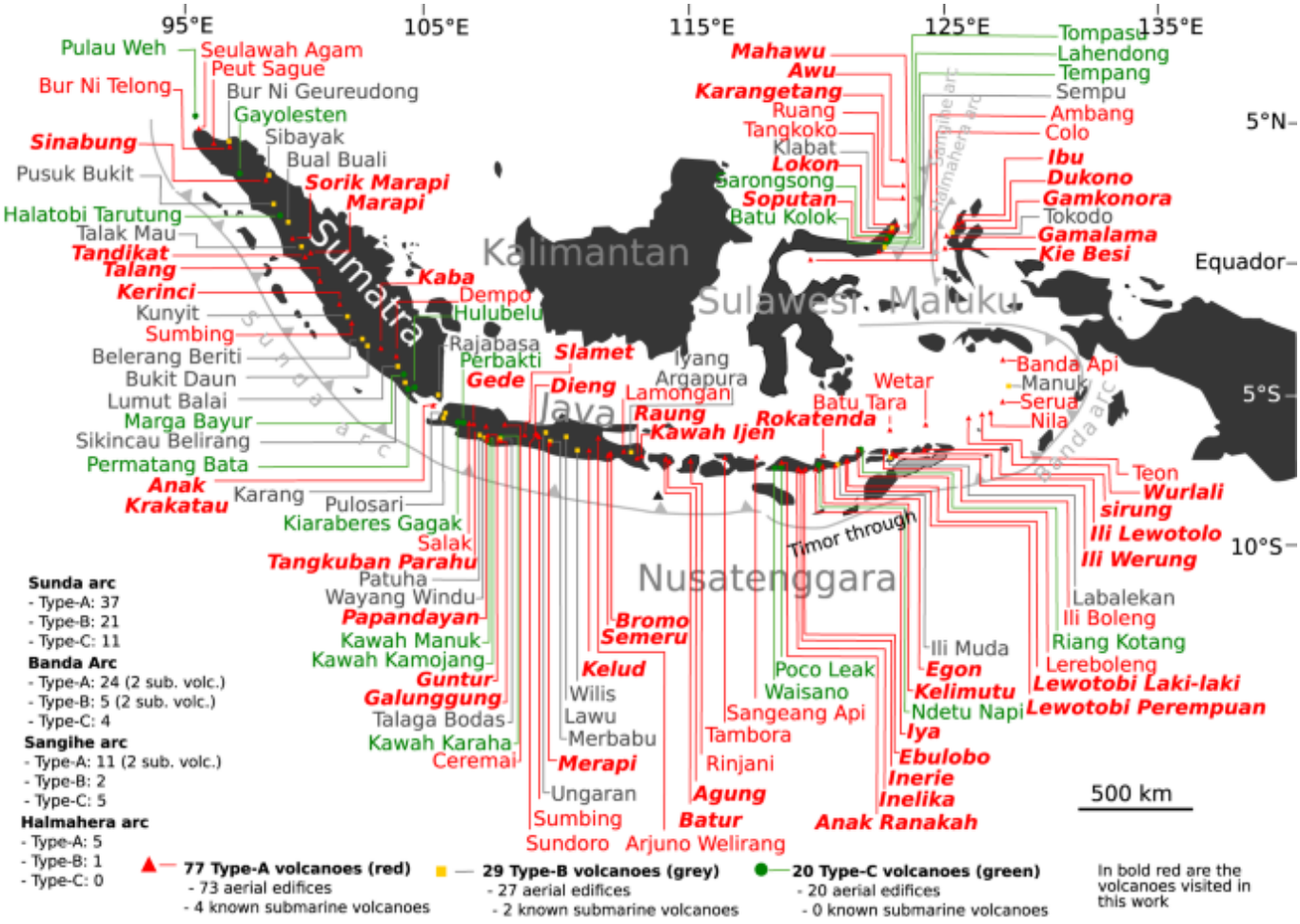
What is our warning level?

While there are security concerns on the ground, there are no active airspace warnings or cautions.

From an **overflight and operational perspective, the major airports remain safe with good security.** Crew security on the ground, if travelling beyond the airpots and cities, should be reviewed.

See Safeairspace.net for further information.

Checking for **Ashtams and Volcano warnings** is important because these do kick off fairy regularly, potentially impacting overflight and airport operations.



And there are loads of them!

The ones to really look out for are:

- **Karangetang** – WAMO/Siau
- **Mount Merapi** – WAHS/Semarang and WAHH/Yogyakarta
- **Mount Semeru** – WARR/Surabaya, WADD/Denpasar and WARA/Malang.

Tell me more about Indonesia!

- Our earlier post about Indonesia's practice of intercepting aircraft outside their airspace can be found here.
- We also did one specifically focusing on Bali because we know a lot of folk like it there.