

09May: New Saudi Arabia warning, North Korea safe again?, more ATC strikes coming

Jamie Rose McMillen
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



Saudi Arabia added to warning list



Is North Korea safe to overfly again?

Weekly **International Ops Bulletin** published by **FSB** for **OPSGROUP** covering critical changes to Airports, Airspace, ATC, Weather, Safety, Threats, Procedures, Visas. Subscribe to the short free version [here](#), or join thousands of your Pilot/Dispatcher/ATC/CAA/Flight Ops colleagues in **OPSGROUP** for the full weekly bulletin, airspace warnings, Ops guides, tools, maps, group discussion, Ask-us-Anything, and a ton more! **Curious? See what you get.** Rated **5 stars** by **125 reviews**.

ZZZZ/Worldwide Ramadan will last from May 15 – June 14. Expect longer processing times for visas in the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey and parts of Asia, as most government offices will be working on reduced hours.

LFZZ/France It looks like there will be yet another ATC strike in the LFMM/Marseille ACC on May 12-13. If it goes ahead, it will be their third weekend strike in a row.

OERK/Riyadh An ongoing dust storm is still affecting ops at the airport today, where poor visibility has resulted in some delays and cancellations.

LPMA/Funchal Following a review, authorities say the restrictive wind limits for arrivals are set to remain the same. These limits have not changed since 1964. Funchal suffers from strong winds which frequently force aircraft to divert. [Read the article.](#)

KABQ/Albuquerque The airport's primary runway 08/26 has reopened after two months of repair.

SLAL/Alcantri The main international airport serving the city of Sucre continues to be closed, due to

ongoing protests and road blocks around the city. It's not yet known how long the protests will last.

KSFO/San Francisco Following a recent incident where an Air Canada flight lined up its approach on a taxiway instead of a parallel runway, the airport has changed its rules for night landings – when the runway in use is parallel to another closed runway, it won't allow visual landings.

PHZZ/Hawaii The sequence of events on Big Island is now this: May 3 – eruption of Kilauea. May 4 – 6.9 mag earthquake, centred near Kilauea. PHTO airport has been inspected post earthquake and there is no damage. May 8 – two new volcanic vents erupted, leading to new evacuation orders in the area. No volcanic ash clouds have been reported. A new TFR exists around the volcano – 8/0671. Operations at other Hawaii airports are unaffected. There remains a high risk of further eruptions.

ZKZZ/North Korea Timezone has changed, effective May 4, North Korea is now on UTC+9. This matches the South Korea timezone.

CYXH/Medicine Hat The airport will be completely closed for runway repairs from May 7 to Jun 1.

KDFW/Dallas Increased congestion expected as the airport's primary arrival runway 17C/35C will be closing for repairs. Partial closure planned from May 24 to early August and a full closure from August to mid-November.

MKZZ/Jamaica The state of emergency that was declared for parts of St James (which includes Montego Bay) has been extended to Aug, to tackle recent violence including shooting incidents.

MPPA/Panama Reports that the airport is increasing its rates by 135%. The airline Viva Air Colombia have already announced they will be suspending flights to the airport from May 20 as a result of the price hike.

LFPB/Paris The airport will be closed for taxiway repairs each night from 20-04z, May 14-18, and June 11-15.

KPVG/Greenville Ongoing runway maintenance. From May 9-13, repair work on both runways will shut down the airport to all flights.

VICG/Chandigargh Airport to be closed from May 12-31 for runway repairs. VIDP/Delhi and VIAR/Amritsar will serve as alternates during this time.

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The only airport in the world with a mandatory wind limit

OPSGROUP Team
9 May, 2018



A slightly skeewiff statue of Cristiano Ronaldo is the most notable thing about LPMA/Funchal Airport which, since last year, has been known as Cristiano Ronaldo International Airport.

Before that, however, the airport on Madeira's east coast was better known for hosting one of the world's most challenging approaches and landings.

The airport's runway is often buffeted by Atlantic winds, while its proximity to the mountains and ocean present yet more difficulties. Pilots scheduled to arrive here must undergo additional training, studying the approach in detail. Airlines wishing to fly into Funchal require special approval from the Portuguese aviation authority.

Earlier this year the Association of Portuguese Airline Pilots (APPLA) said it was vital that the airport closes when winds exceed the maximum limits (depending on wind direction). In a statement it said that *"there are limits to anything in aviation. These limits generally exist for several reasons, including safety issues"*. APPLA was concerned there had been some 20 commercial landings in the first half of 2017 when the wind

had been exceeding limits.

The Airport is located on a plateau on the east coast of Madeira Island. Except for the seaside, ground raises rapidly very close to it. This fact generates, very often, wind variation and turbulence. Also severe low altitude wind shear conditions and / or micro burst are likely to be encountered.

What are the limits?

When landing

Maximum of two minutes mean Wind Speed Values indicated by the Touchdown anemometer:

- In the sector 300° to 010° MAG (clockwise) - 15KT, with the maximum Wind Gust of 25KT
- In the sector 020° to 040° MAG (clockwise) - 20KT, with the maximum Wind Gust of 30KT
- In the sector 120° to 190° MAG (clockwise), and if Runway in use is 05 - 20KT with a maximum Wind Gust of 30KT, and if Runway in use is 23 - 15KT, subject also to maximum Wind Gust of 25KT as indicated by MID Anemometer.

Maximum of two minutes mean Wind Speed Values, including Gust indicated by the MID or ROSÁRIO Anemometers

- In the Sector 200° to 230° MAG (clockwise) - 25KT.

When Taking-off

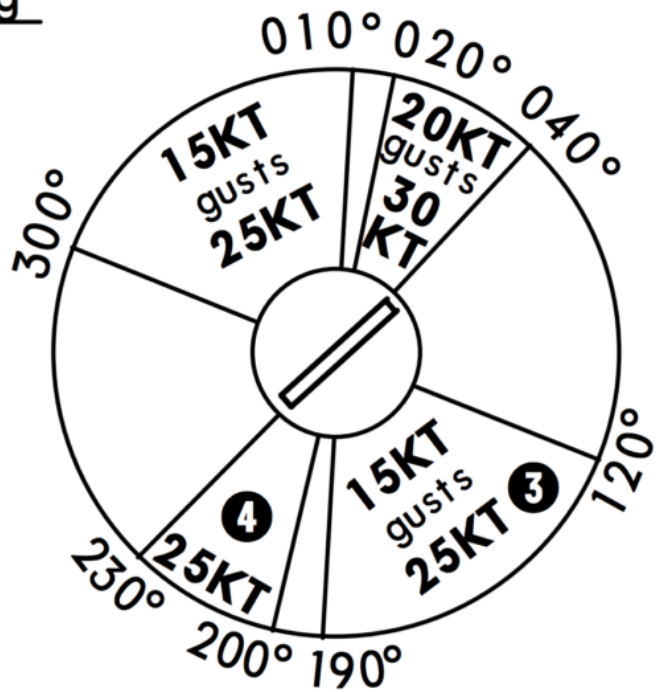
Maximum of two minutes mean Wind Speed Values indicated by the MID anemometer:

- In the sector 300° to 010° MAG (clockwise) - 20KT with no Gust limitations
- In the sector 020° to 040° MAG (clockwise) - 25KT with no Gust limitations
- In the sector 120° to 190° MAG (clockwise) and if Runway in use is 05 - 25KT with no Gust limitations, and if Runway in use is 23 - 20KT, also with no Gust limitations

NOTE: The limitations above do not supersede any Operators or Aircraft Operations Manual (AOM) limitations if these are more restrictive.

Wind limitations for landing
(relative to the touchdown
anemometer two minutes
mean values only): max
permissible wind.

- 3** Relative to the MID anemometer.
- 4** Relative to the MID or Rosario anemometers including gust.



Turbulence

- Attention should be paid to the WIND DIRECTION INDICATORS located on the south side of the runway, near each touchdown area. They will reflect unexpected wind changes. Occasionally they will indicate wind from opposite directions;
- When landing on RWY 05 wind differences greater than 5 KT, between Rosário and MID anemometers, may indicate turbulence on final;
- When landing on RWY 23 with winds from South and Westerly Sectors, one may experience severe turbulence at low altitude over the RWY Threshold;
- Headwind or nearly so, up to 15 KT will cause “WEAK” turbulence on final;
- Wind of 15 KT from sector 020° to 050° MAG (clockwise) may cause “MODERATE” turbulence;
- Wind of 15 KT or even less from sector 300° to 020° MAG (clockwise) may cause “SEVERE” turbulence;
- Down drafts or up drafts are to be expected near the threshold of runways 05 and 23.

Important to note: Air Traffic Control won't stop you from making an approach and landing if the wind limits are exceeded but they will promptly report all flights having done so to the authorities back on the mainland. There have been threats of license and airline operational approval suspensions in the past.

Looks pretty fun though!

Extra Information:

- Portugal AIP
- Pilot's Briefing Room - Funchal

Italy ATC Strike announced for May 8th

Declan Selleck
9 May, 2018



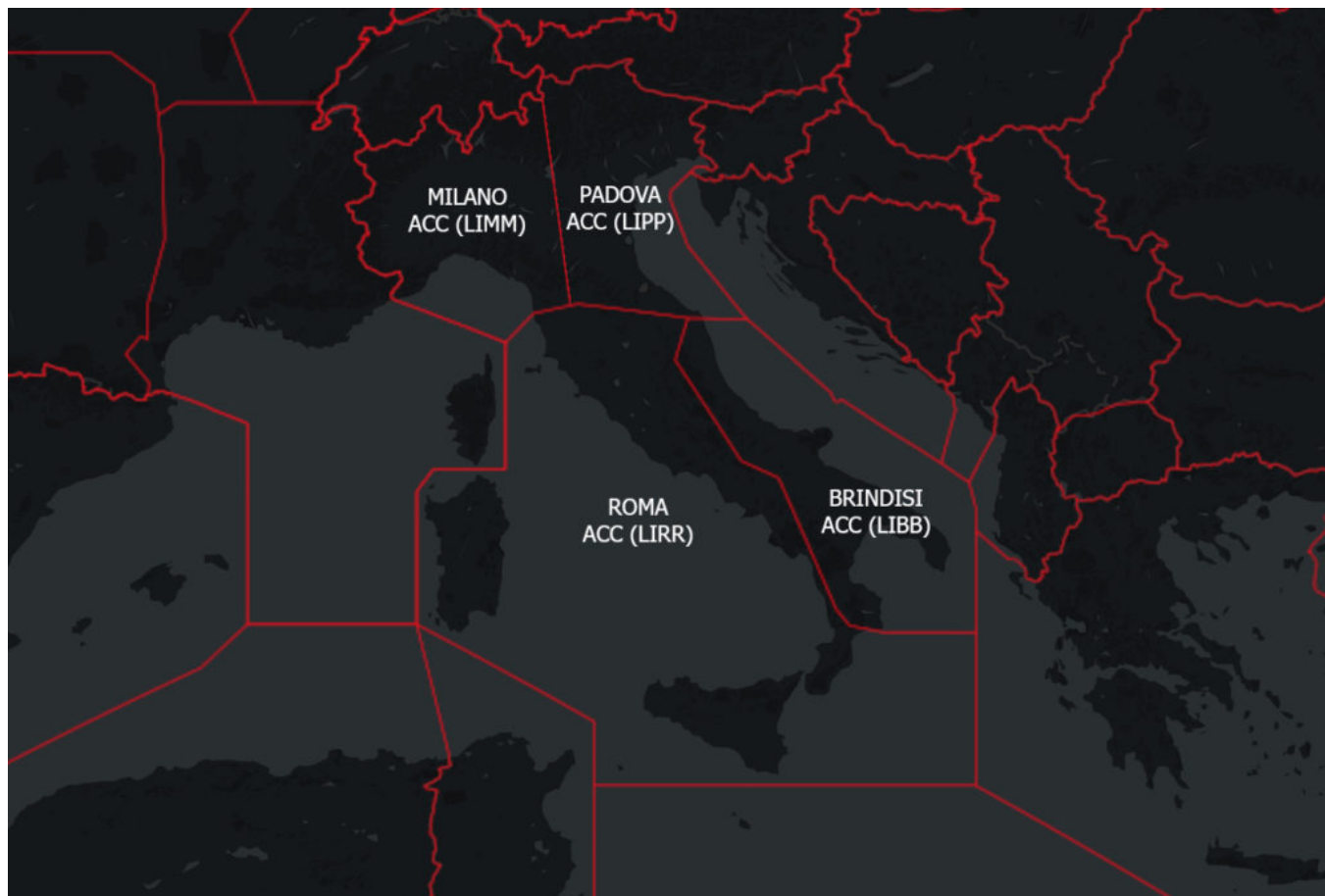
All airports in Italy and all ACC's are planning a strike for Tuesday May 8th, from 08-16Z. Overflights, and intercontinental flights (eg US arrivals) are exempt. Expect disruption on the ground at all airports all day.

On strike from 11-15z:

- The ACC's: LIBB/Brindisi, LIMM/Milano and LIPP/Padova.
- The airports: LIMC/Milan-Malpensa, LIEE/Cagliari, LICC/Catania, LIRA/Rome-Ciampino, LIBR/Brindisi, LICA/Lamezia Terme, LIMF/Turin and LICJ/Palermo.

On strike from 08-16z:

- LIRR/Roma ACC.
- The airports: LIRF/Rome-Fiumicino, LIRP/Pisa and LIRQ/Florence.



You can see the full Notam [here](#). For updates, keep an eye on the Eurocontrol NOP page on the day of the strike.

Additional strikes are taking place by ground handlers at LIRP/Pisa, LIMC/Milano Malpensa, LIML/Milano Linate, LIRQ/Florence and LIPY/Ancona – so expect particularly big delays at those airports.

03MAY: New NAT CPDLC procedure, Airlines still overflying Syria, ATC strikes in Italy & France

Jamie Rose McMillen
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



New NAT CPDLC procedure coming soon



Which airlines are still flying over Syria?

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LFZZ/France Yet another French ATC strike is planned for the LFMM/Marseille sector this coming weekend – from the morning of Sat May 5 until the morning of Mon May 7. [More info here.](#)

LIZZ/Italy All airports in Italy and all ACC's are planning a strike for Tuesday May 8th, from 08-16Z. Overflights, and intercontinental flights (eg US arrivals) are exempt. [More info here.](#)

LFZZ/France Air France have cancelled 15 percent of its flights today, May 3, due to ongoing staff strikes. Paris airports worst affected.

KHPN/White Plains On Sat May 5, the airport will be running a full scale plane crash exercise from 11am-1pm, which will close the second runway 11/29 between those times.

KSAV/Savannah Flight operations have resumed following the C130 crash on a nearby highway on May 2, which killed all nine people on board.

FTTJ/N'Djamena No jet fuel available until May 10 at the earliest.

OSZZ/Syria Overnight missile attack on a number of military sites in northern Syria on Apr 30, most likely carried out by Israel. Eurocontrol NM has updated the Syria 'warning' notice to read: "Taking account of potential military activity and the possibility of intermittent disruption of radio navigation equipment, appropriate risk assessment needs to be undertaken when planning flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean area". [More info here.](#)

KJFK/New York Following the delays and baggage chaos caused by the January storm, the airport is introducing new rules for flights during winter storms – airlines will now have to get permission to land

before the flight leaves its origin; and all six terminals will have to share equipment, staff and gates.

KBZN/Bozeman Between now and May 19, the main runway will be closed, and the only available runway will be 11/29 – which is only 5050 feet long.

OEZZ/Saudi Arabia Once again increased missile activity in the southwest of Saudi, with 35 missile launches this year by rebels in Yemen, 14 of them in April. About the same amount as Aug 2016 and Dec 2015, but most are now being shot down by Saudi Patriot missiles; only 3 have struck Saudi soil this year. OERK/Riyadh continues to be on the radar for the Houthis. Of most concern, an F-15 was hit by a SAM over Yemen on 21 Mar, fired from OYSH airport. There is definitely a risk to operations in Saudi airspace, even outside the Scatana area. [More info here.](#)

WAMG/Gorontalo Operational again after a 2 day closure, B737 removed after overrun.

HKNW/Wilson Potholes on the taxiways and part of the runway at Wilson – Nairobi's second airport. A DHC-8 Dash 8 recently got stuck in the mud, trying to avoid them. [More info here.](#)

YSCB/Canberra Canberra will have CAT II ILS from July. Some WIP on lights and systems in the interim.

VOGO/Goa Runway repair work means the airport will be closed each day from 6.30am to 12.30pm local time, May 1-6.

UDYZ/Yerevan Significant nationwide protests. Some roads from airport blocked. Most major streets in Yerevan also blocked, after government opposition leader called for a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience.

EPKK/Krakow LOT Airlines unions have called off a strike that was planned to start on May 1st, after airline management won a court injunction, arguing that the strike action was illegal.

VTUU/Ubon Ratchathani Operational again after a fire on May 1st forced the airport to close.

CYYG/Charlottetown The main Rwy 03/21 will be closed for repair until Jul 28. The other Rwy 10/28 will remain open, but has no ILS, so the airport has warned more planes may have to be rerouted this summer in the event of adverse weather and poor visibility.

EDDL/Dusseldorf GA Flights after 1900 local time, or GA flights to/from Non-Schengen countries need a PPR. Arrange this 24 hours in advance with PPR.DUS@jetaviation.de.

EFJO/Joensuu No Jet A1 available over the weekend May 4-6.

KIMT/Iron Mountain Airport closed until May 6 for runway repair. But even after that, the main runway 01/19 will be closed until May 15. In the meantime, the other runway 13/31 will be open, but that's only 3800ft long.

VTSP/Phuket The airport is not accepting any new requests for flights until May 7. This is due to congestion caused by the runway being closed for repairs each night, meaning all the airlines are having to reschedule their flights.

OYZZ/Yemen You might come across this nasty little Notam issued by Yemen, cunningly set to a "PERM" validity – OYSC A0026/17 – advising pilots that "Sanaa FIR and Yemeni Airports are safe". This is clearly not true. [More info here.](#)

HDAM/Djibouti Multiple reports in the last few weeks of a high-powered laser light near the airport, centred near Doraleh Port. This is not your average handheld laser, but if local reports are true, it's the Chinese testing its use as a weapon. There is a mil Notam about this also.

KLGB/Long Beach The main runway 12/30 will be closed for repair on Mon-Thur nights from 2200-1400 local time (yes, 16 hours) May 14-25. The other runway 07L/25R remains open.

SCZZ/Chile LATAM Airlines are expected to resume normal flight schedules from May 3 after cabin crew ended their 18-day strike.

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Who is still flying over Syria?

OPSGROUP Team
9 May, 2018



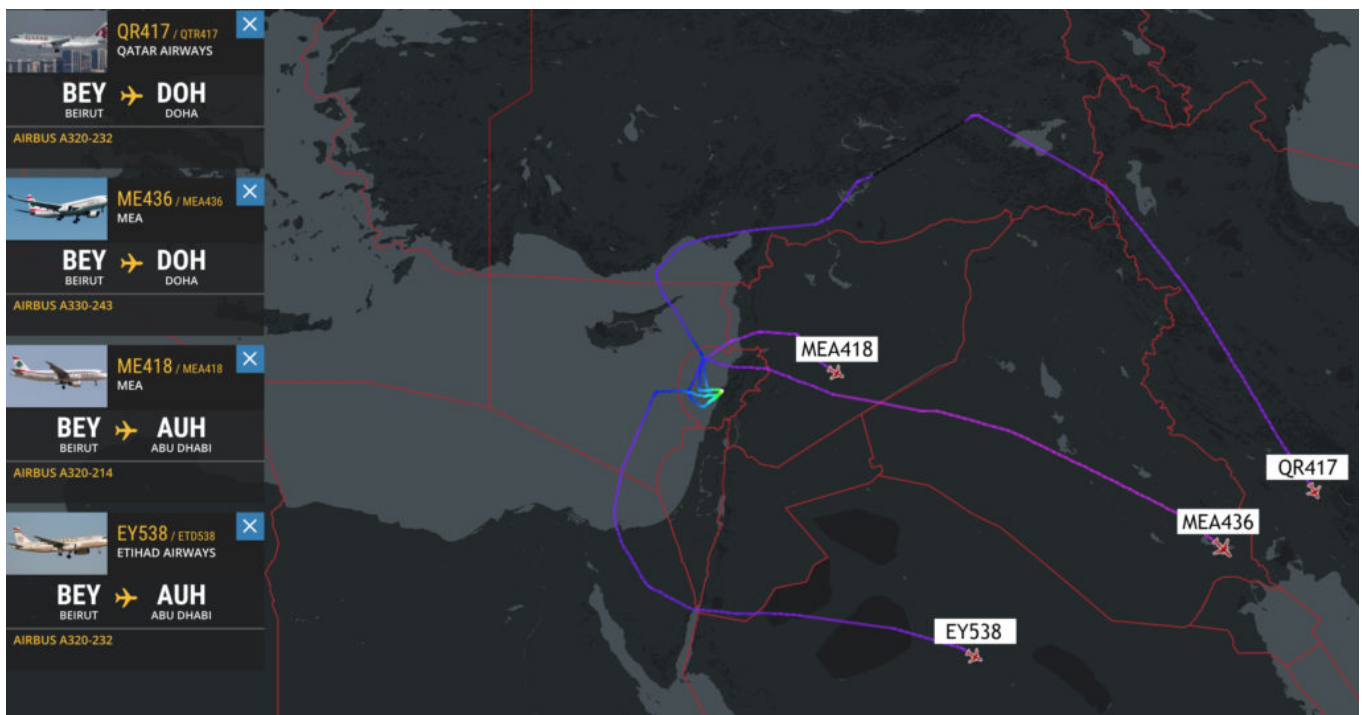
We have reported recently on the complex airspace picture and dangers associated with the ongoing Syrian conflict.

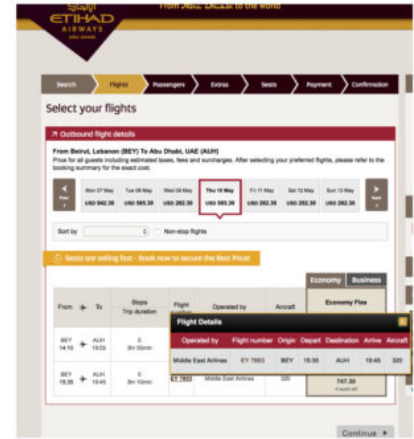
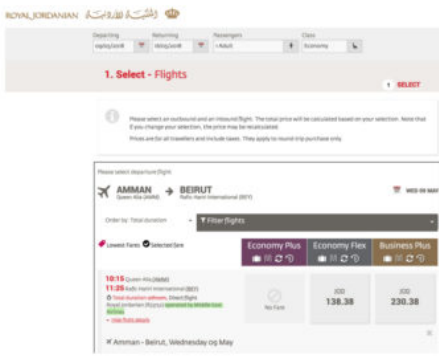
Most major carriers have taken the advice of numerous government agencies to avoid Syrian airspace altogether; the FAA going as far as calling on all operators flying within 200 nautical miles of the OSTT/Damascus FIR to “exercise caution”. Today, the only airlines flying over the airspace are locally based Syrian airlines, Iraq Airlines and Lebanon’s Middle Eastern Airlines.



These MEA overflights are of interest. The airline is a member of the SkyTeam alliance and has codeshare agreements with several high-profile airlines (Air Canada, Air France, etc.) Despite the repeated warnings of the ongoing dangers associated with overflights of this conflict zone, the airline has chosen to schedule more than half-a-dozen flights over the airspace each day.

Some of these flights have the usual codeshare practise of other airlines booking their passengers on MEA flights. Our research shows that Etihad Airways, Qatar Airways (Oneworld Alliance) and Royal Jordanian Airlines (Oneworld Alliance) passengers are still being booked on MEA flights to/from Beirut; likely unbeknown to their customers of the increased flight risk. All three airlines continue to service Beirut with their own aircraft, but all three avoid Syrian airspace, naturally accepting the best advice to avoid the area completely.





Something isn't right here: no warning anywhere about these flights being flown over Syria.

So why is it safe for passengers to overfly Syria on an MEA flight, but not on any of the other airlines? And more importantly, why is MEA still operating over Syria anyway?

It looks like Kuwait Airways will be the next codeshare partner of MEA, so it will be interesting to see whether the issue of the overflight of conflict zones will be discussed.

As always, keep an eye on our Safeairspace map for the latest worldwide updates.

Potholes at HKNW/Wilson Airport, Nairobi

David Mumford
9 May, 2018



Some pictures have been doing the rounds on social media showing huge potholes on some the taxiways and part of the runway at **HKNW/Wilson** — Nairobi's second airport — and a DHC-8 Dash 8 aircraft which got stuck in the mud, trying to avoid them.





According to the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) website, Wilson Airport is “one of the busiest airports in terms of aircraft movement in East and Central Africa. However, so far the KAA have not issued any warnings on either their website or by Notam regarding the poor state of the taxiways and runway.

Last minute ATC grab in Congress

OPSGROUP Team

9 May, 2018



On Friday Apr 27, the US House of Representatives approved a long-delayed bill to authorize funding for the FAA, after GA advocates had mobilized earlier in the week to fight-off a last-minute attempt to privatize US ATC.

Late on Tuesday Apr 24, Republican Bill Shuster, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, introduced a “managers amendment” to the proposed five-year FAA funding bill.

His amendment called for two things:

1. Remove the US ATC system from the FAA and instead make it part of the Transportation Department.
2. Allow it to be run by a 13-member advisory board made up mainly by airlines.

“Both of these provisions were drafted in the dark of night, without any opportunity for public debate,” said NBAA.

After last minute lobbying by GA advocates, the two contentious items in the bill were removed.

While Shuster agreed to remove the measures, he reiterated that he “strongly believe[s] Congress must pass real air traffic control reform” and that he sees that happening “somewhere down the line.”

“We are pleased to see this legislation pass the House,” said NBAA President and CEO Ed Bolen. “While the

bill is not perfect, a long-term reauthorization is critical to advancing our shared priorities. Equally important, this bipartisan bill will modernize, not privatize air traffic control. We are grateful that members of Congress heard their constituents' concerns about ATC privatization, and reflected those concerns in bringing this legislation to final passage."

26APR: France ATC strike this weekend, Saudi-Yemen airspace update, New CPDLC messages on the NAT

Jamie Rose McMillen
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



LFMM/Marseille ATC strike



Saudi – Yemen Airspace Update

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EGGX/Shanwick Expect a new CPDLC procedure on the NAT sometime after May 24, designed to prevent pilots from acting on any old CPDLC messages that might have been delayed in the network. Aircraft will receive a message immediately after they enter each control area telling them to "SET MAX UPLINK DELAY VALUE" to a certain number of seconds. ICAO have published a new **NAT Ops Bulletin** with the details in full.

LIZZ/Italy Various aviation sector strikes planned for May 8. Some national ATC workers will be on strike from 8-16z, and some airport ground will go on strike at the following airports: LIML/Milan-Linate, LIMC/Milan-Malpensa, LIRP/Pisa, and LIRQ/Florence.

MTTP/Port-au-Prince On Apr 16, the US Embassy in Haiti issued a security alert warning of a rising number of violent armed robberies against US citizens after departing the airport.

HSZZ/South Sudan EASA has extended its warning for South Sudan to Oct 25. That includes the warnings issued by the US, UK, France and Germany, most of whom advise minimum FL260 for overflights. We think FL300 is more sensible. [More info here.](#)

KZZZ/USA Heavy traffic expected at KSDF/Louisville, KLOU/Bowman and KJVV/Clark County from May 2-6, for the Kentucky Derby on May 5. The FAA have published some [special procedures.](#)

LFKF/Figari Possible delays with fuelling until the end of the month, due to some broken-down fuel trucks.

LIZZ/Italy From Apr 26 onwards, CPDLC is now available across all Italian airspace above FL285.

LFZZ/France More Air France strikes planned on May 3-4 and 7-8. Daily impact likely to be similar to before – 30% of flights cancelled, with the Paris airports worst affected.

NWZZ/New Caledonia Around 20% of firefighters at the country's main international airport NWWW/Noumea have joined a strike by colleagues at the domestic airport NWWW/Magenta. So far no impact on international flights, although that could change if the strike persists.

DFFD/Ougadougou No jet fuel available until Apr 30.

MNZZ/Nicaragua Worsening violence over the past few days with riots resulting in 24 deaths. The US have warned access to MNMG/Managua Airport could be disrupted by the protests, and is now pulling out some of its embassy staff and advising against travel to the country.

ZKZZ/North Korea North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said there will be no more intercontinental and medium-range missile tests, ahead of talks that are scheduled with South Korea in late April, and with the US in May. He said the country will now focus on economic development and peace talks instead.

LEZZ/Spain ATC strikes planned in the Barcelona ACC, which covers the eastern half of Spain and the Balearic Islands. No fixed dates yet, but if it goes ahead it would happen sometime after Jun 20, with each strike lasting 24hrs.

SCZZ/Chile LATAM has cancelled and rescheduled more flights through to May 2, due to the ongoing cabin crew strike. So far the airline has already had to cancel over 2000 flights because of the strike.

KZZZ/USA AOPA has published a list of the top 10 US airports where you're likely to get overcharged at FBO's: KACY/Atlantic City, KCPR/Casper, KCHO/Charlottesville, KMQS/Chester County, KHXD/Hilton Head, KIFP/Laughlin, KORF/Norfolk, KRST/Rochester, KBJC/Rocky Mountain, KISN/Sloulin Field. [Full details here.](#)

SMZZ/Suriname Ops normal with Suriname/Paramaribo ATC again as the system failure has been restored, the contingency plan cancelled, and Guyana are no longer providing ATS assistance.

HLLM/Mitiga On Apr 19, militants fired rockets at the airport yet again, this time causing damage to the airport building, parts of the apron tarmac, and a parked Libya Airlines A320 aircraft.

UIII/Irkutsk The airport will be closed for runway repairs each day Tue-Sat between 11-15z from May 5 – Jun 30. Not available as an alternate during these times.

WARR/Juanda The airport will be closed for everything except medevac helicopter ops, every night from

16-22z until Jul 3.

WSZZ/Singapore ASEAN Summit happening at the end of April. At WSSS/Singapore, no parking/slots available from Apr 23-30. At WSSL/Seletar, airport will be closed on Apr 27 0900-1400z, and Apr 28 0030-0730z.

VTSP/Phuket The airport will be closing from 1730-2330z each night from 26 Apr – 07 May, for runway repairs.

ORZZ/Iraq Following the Iraqi government's decision in March to re-open the Kurdish airports ORER/Erbil and ORSU/Sulaymaniyah to international flights, Iran has now lifted its own ban on international flights to these airports too. Commercial flights from OIIE/Tehran to ORER/Erbil are set to resume on Apr 27.

FEFF/Bangui The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are now advising against travel to central Bangui between the airport and the Ubangi River – which is pretty much the entire riverside area of the city centre. The FCO advise against all travel to the rest of Bangui and the Central African Republic.

LLZZ/Israel Israel says its satellite surveillance has detected Iranian military activity at multiple airports across Syria. Israel has now placed its own military on high alert in anticipation of potential Iranian-linked attacks, in retaliation for an Israeli attack on a military base in Syria on 9 April which killed at least three Iranian soldiers.

OPZZ/Pakistan All scheduled commercial flights will move over from OPRN/Benazir Bhutto International Airport to the New Islamabad Airport when it opens on May 3 (delayed from Apr 20). It will have the ICAO code OPIS, and will take over the IATA code ISB from Benazir Bhutto. Initially all GA/BA should continue to use the old airport, until procedures are in place for using the new one.

KZZZ/USA As Congress considers a new five-year FAA funding bill, GA advocates look to have fought-off attempts to privatize US ATC. [More info here.](#)

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Japan scrambles record number of jets as tensions rise with China

OPSGROUP Team
9 May, 2018

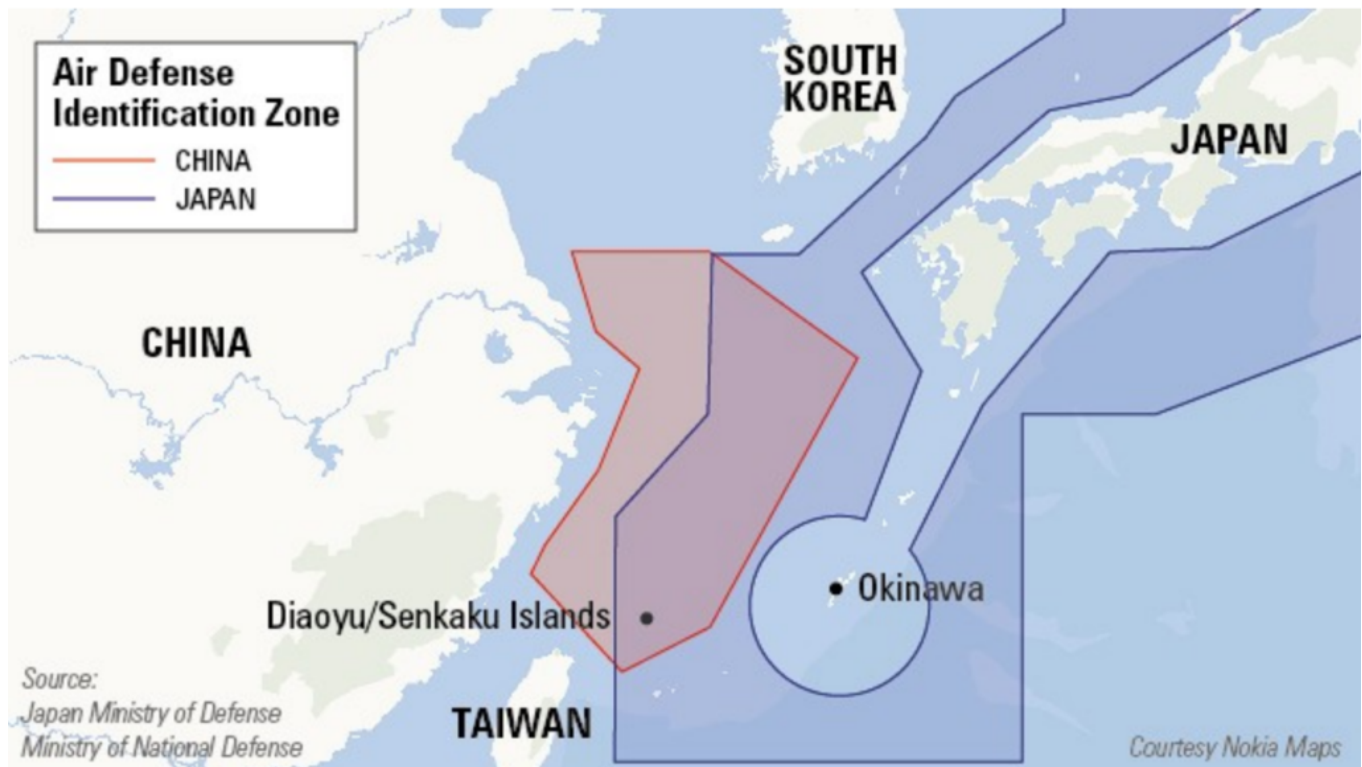


In Short: Japan scrambled a record number of fighter jets in the past year. The number rose to an all-time high of 1,168 in the year to March 2017, easily beating the previous record of 944 set at the height of the cold war in 1984. Chinese aircraft approaching Japanese airspace prompted 851 of the incidents, an increase of 280 over the previous year.

According to official figures released on Thursday, Japan's Air Self Defense Force is scrambling fighter jets in record numbers as Chinese military activity escalates. Interceptions of Chinese planes rose by half in the year to March 31, in response to increases in the communist country's activity in and around the East China Sea.

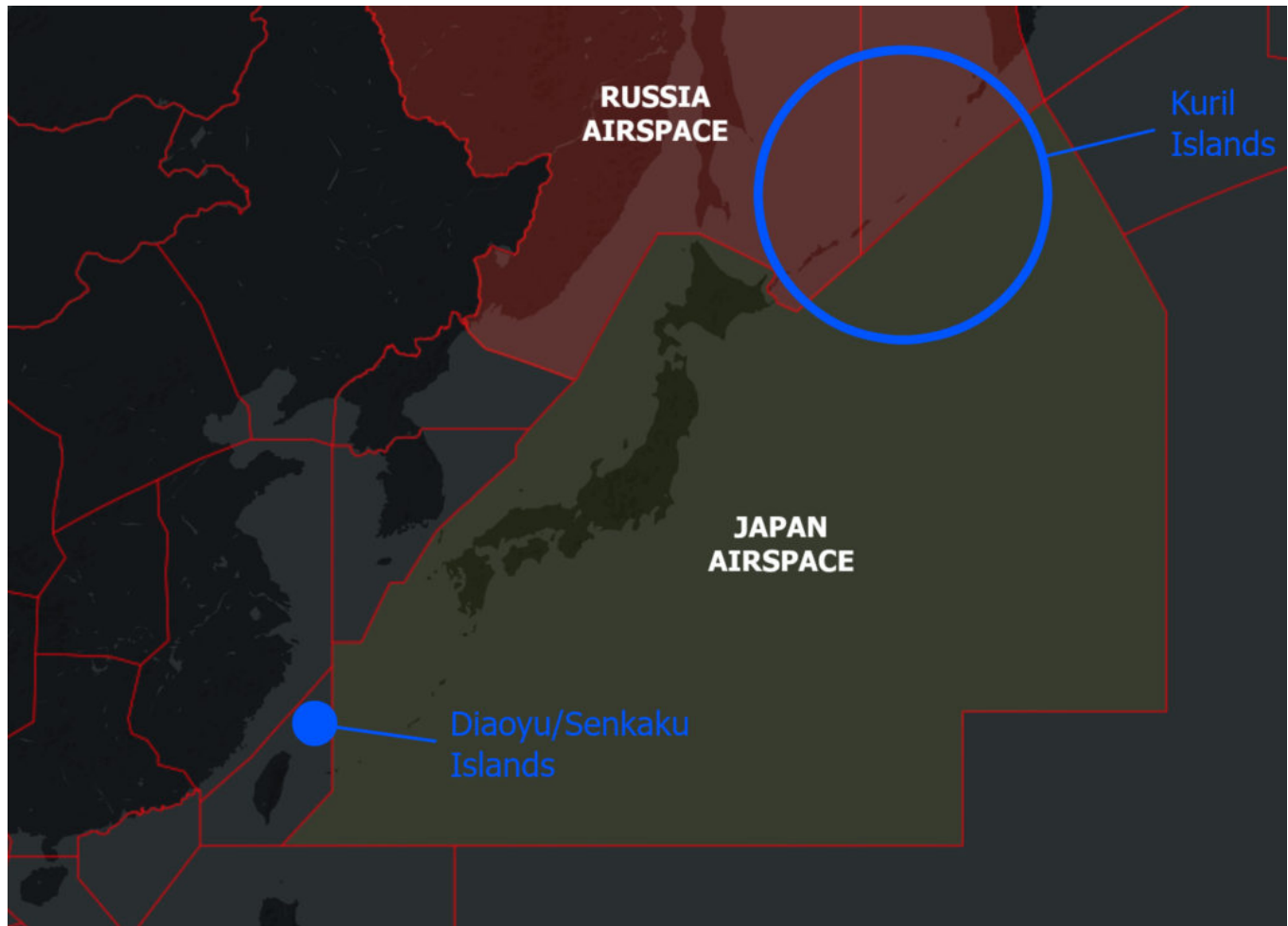
Japan worries that **China** is probing its air defences as part of a push to extend its military influence in the East China Sea and western Pacific, where Japan controls an island chain stretching 1,400 km (870 miles) south towards Taiwan. The figures highlight China's growing assertion of military power in East Asia as it expands and modernises its armed forces in line with rapid economic growth.

For the first time, Chinese jets recently began flying through the Tsushima Strait into the Sea of Japan, and through the Miyako Strait into the Pacific Ocean.



But it's not only China that Japan is worried about. Last week, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned **North Korea** may be capable of firing a missile loaded with sarin nerve gas towards Japan. "There is a possibility that North Korea already has a capability to deliver missiles with sarin as warheads," he told a parliamentary national security committee.

And then there's **Russia**. Scrambles by Japanese aircraft were high throughout the 1980s in response to flights by Soviet aircraft during the cold war. They fell back to 100-200 incidents a year during the 1990s and 2000s, but began to pick up again a decade ago as both China and Russia grew more assertive.



Mr Abe has been trying to negotiate with Russian president Vladimir Putin over the future of four disputed islands in the Kuril chain to Japan's north, but has made limited progress, with the jet scrambles showing Moscow's determination to make its presence felt on its eastern border. There were 301 scrambles to intercept Russian aircraft during the year, 13 more than the previous year, including incidents where Russian jets circumnavigated the Japanese Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands to the south.

Extra Reading:

- Why I'm Thankful for Japan and South Korea

Hong Kong near-misses on the rise

OPSGROUP Team
9 May, 2018



According to recent figures released by the Civil Aviation

Department (CAD) of Hong Kong, **2017** saw an **increase** in 'loss of separation' incidents within it's airspace.

Twelve times, two aircraft came within 1000 feet and less than 5 nautical miles of each other last year. This is the **highest** in six years.

Local law makers are now calling for a new ATC system to be implemented. A local pilot operating regularly through VHHH/Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) commented to FSB recently that the Air Traffic Services have been in "*constant decline*" over the past seven to ten years.

CAD insisted that alerts were issued "*in a timely manner as per system design*". It said "*losses of separation*" were due to a number of factors such as adverse weather, operating procedures and human factors and they did occasionally occur due to the old air traffic system and other systems around the world. "*CAD would investigate every individual incident according to established procedures and make necessary improvement,*" the department added.



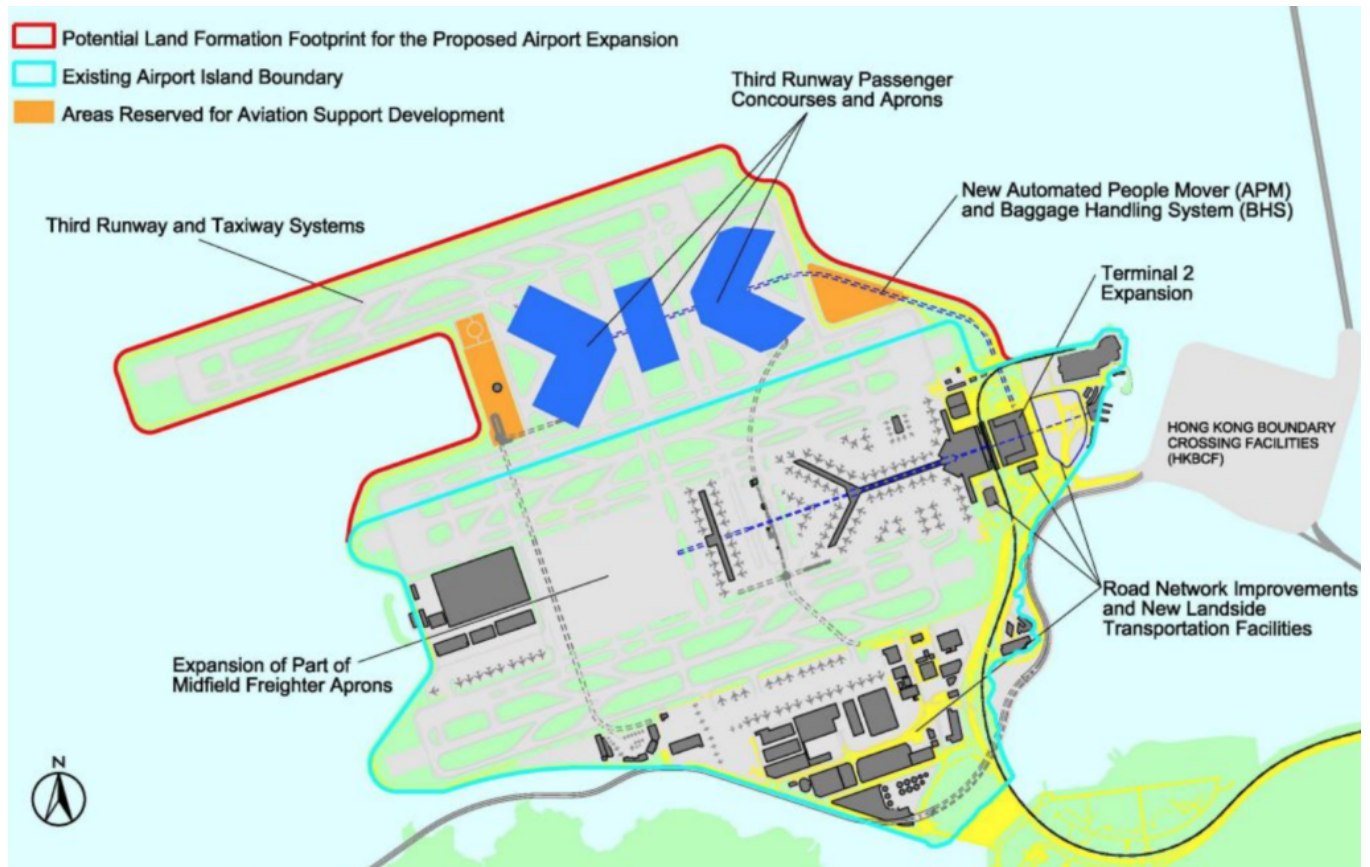
Hong Kong airspace is congested at the best of times. With four major airports within 150 kilometres and many overflights to and from mainland China, the 2016 introduction of a new Air Traffic System known as “Autotrac3” was set to assist in solving some of the complexity whilst increasing safety. The transition to the new system was challenging with various system issues.



The TMA is also complicated by significant terrain and regular adverse weather. Recent statistics show that air traffic is up over 3.5% already in 2018 with 36,000 movements occurring monthly (6.4 million passengers).

The continued massive year-on-year growth has seen the start of work to construct a third runway, expected to be operational in 2023-24 to facilitate the expected 100 million passengers using HKIA by that time.

This will no doubt just put further strain on an already complicated airspace situation.



The new third runway at HKIA- coming 2023-24.

Have you operated through the Hong Kong area lately? Can you provide an update?

Extra Reading:

- Civil Aviation Department Annual Report 2016/2017
- Three-runway System Hong Kong

18APR: Expanded Syria airspace risk, Russia is not closing to US flights, Morocco's new Agadir ACC

Jamie Rose McMillen
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



US updates its Syria airspace warning



Russia is not closing its airspace to American flights

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GMZZ/Morocco The new Agadir ACC is due to open on Apr 26. Within the GMMM/Casablanca FIR, the Agadir ACC will manage air traffic off the coast (a handful of airways linking Spain with the Canary Islands), whilst the old Casablanca ACC will continue to manage everything else across the rest of the country. The new AFTN code for Agadir ACC is GMACZQZX. More details will be published on the [Eurocontrol NOP Portal](#) by Apr 20. In the meantime, you can see the full AIRAC update [here](#).

OSZZ/Syria Reports of another missile strike over Syria on Apr 17 were denied by the Syrian military as a false alarm, but say their defence systems were triggered by an electronic attack on their radars by Israel and the US – both of whom deny the claim.

VTZZ/Thailand Most parts of northern and central Thailand, including Bangkok, will be affected by powerful tropical storms from Apr 17-19, marking the end of the Songkran holiday.

KCOS/Colorado Springs The airport has now re-opened, after a fire that broke out overnight on Apr 16 forced the main terminal to be closed and all commercial flights suspended.

HAAB/Addis Ababa Flights have resumed after a surprise ATC strike on the morning of Apr 17 brought airport activities to a virtual standstill for more than an hour. Unions have not ruled out further action if demands are not met.

HEZZ/Egypt As authorities continue to confront armed militants in North Sinai, the Nile Delta and the Western Desert, the state of emergency across the country has been extended for another three months – the fourth time since it was first declared last year.

AYZZ/Papua New Guinea The National Weather Service are currently on strike until Apr 25. METAR/TAF is still being provided at AYPY/Port Moresby, the country's main international airport. Other airports might not have any weather forecasts published.

AYBK/Buka Island Damage to the precision approach path indicator lights, blamed on vandalism. PAPI is now out of action until the end of May, and national carrier Air Niugini has suspended all flights at the airport until further notice.

GATB/Timbuktu Terrorist attack on the UN base near the airport on Apr 15, including a rocket and car bomb attack that left one UN peacekeeper dead, and over 20 others wounded. To operate to GATB, you need authorization from the Malian Air Force. Email them at panif.cccoa@gmail.com, or phone +223 20221631.

ENTC/Tromso Airport's only runway will be closed overnight Sun-Fri 22-04Z due construction from May 24-Sep 13. [Full details here.](#)

VNRB/Rajbiraj A new runway has been built, 1500 metres long and 30 metres wide, to replace the old grass runway – and the airport is now set to open to domestic traffic on May 1.

EGGX/Shanwick NAT has released a guidance document of Performance Based Separation Minima. There's nice information on specific requirements for airspaces. [Full details here.](#)

KGVT/Greenville The airport will close for runway repairs from Apr 28-30, and again from May 5-7. No NOTAM yet, so keep a watch out for changes.

PGUM/Agana A big TRA is active from Apr 15-22, which is centered on Anderson AFB, but does cover a lot of airspace north of PGUM airport, and extends from 2600-20000 feet. [Full details here.](#)

KBGR/Bangor All RVR at the airport will be out of service until Apr 20. During the same time, CAT II and III ILS won't be available on RWY 15.

NWWW/Noumea Airport is open, but backup power is out of service. Cannot be used as an alternate until Apr 20.

LCZZ/Cyprus Cyprus has restricted a section of airspace (LCD3&LCD4) just south of the island for the British Military. As of now, this area is reserved until May 12.

KZZZ/USA The FAA have issued a new Advisory with standardized guidance for operating at non-towered airports. [Full details here.](#)

ZUJZ/Jiuzhaigou The airport will reopen on Apr 18, after being closed since Aug 2017 due to a 7-magnitude earthquake in the nearby Jiuzhai Valley – a popular tourist destination in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

UUWW/Moscow A Moscow airspace closure SFC-FL100 means there will be no arrivals or departures allowed from any Moscow airports between 0740-0810z each day on Apr 16-19. Expect disruption before and after these times too. This closure is for rehearsals for the annual May 9 Victory Day parade and airshow.

WMKK/Kuala Lumpur Possible delays over the next couple of months due to reduced runway capacity. Every night from 17-22z until the end of Apr, the airport will be closing one of its three runways – a different one each night. Then from May 11 to June 7, one runway will be closed completely.

OYSN/Sana'a On Apr 12, Saudi warplanes bombed the airport in the Houthi-controlled Yemeni capital city, in response to Houthi rockets launched towards Saudi targets on Apr 11. Saudi Arabia had attacked Sanaa airport in Nov 2017, damaging its ground navigation tower and parts of its runway.

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US updates its Syria airspace warning

OPSGROUP Team
9 May, 2018



Following the US, UK and French airstrikes on Syria on April 14, the US FAA say there is now a risk posed to civil aviation within 200 nautical miles of the country due to increased military activity, GPS and comms interference, and the potential for more long range surface-to-air missiles in the area.

In the updated US FAA conflict zone Notam and Background Information for Syria, US civil aviation continues to be prohibited from operating within Syrian airspace, but has also now been instructed to “exercise caution” when operating within 200 nautical miles of Syria’s OSTT/Damascus FIR.

As they say in the Background Information doc, here’s why this updated guidance has been published:

“Heightened military activity associated with the Syrian conflict has the potential to spill over into the adjacent airspace managed by neighboring states and eastern portions of the Mediterranean Sea. Military operations may result in the risk of GPS interference, communications jamming, and errant long-range SAMs straying into adjacent airspace within

200 nautical miles of the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR). These activities may inadvertently pose hazards to U.S. civil aviation transiting the region. This concern stems from the Syrian military response to previous airstrikes on 10 February 2018, which included Syrian forces launching long-range SAMs. Some of the Syrian SAMs flew into adjacent airspace and landed in Lebanon and Jordan, according to media reporting. GPS interference and communications jamming in the region may also occur associated with the military activity. Some U.S. air carriers have reported GPS interference in portions of the eastern Mediterranean Sea in the period following the 10 February airstrikes, and the interference may have originated from the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR) as a defensive response.”

The US FAA haven't provided a map to show where boundary would lie for 200 nautical miles from the border of Syrian airspace, but we think it would look something like this:

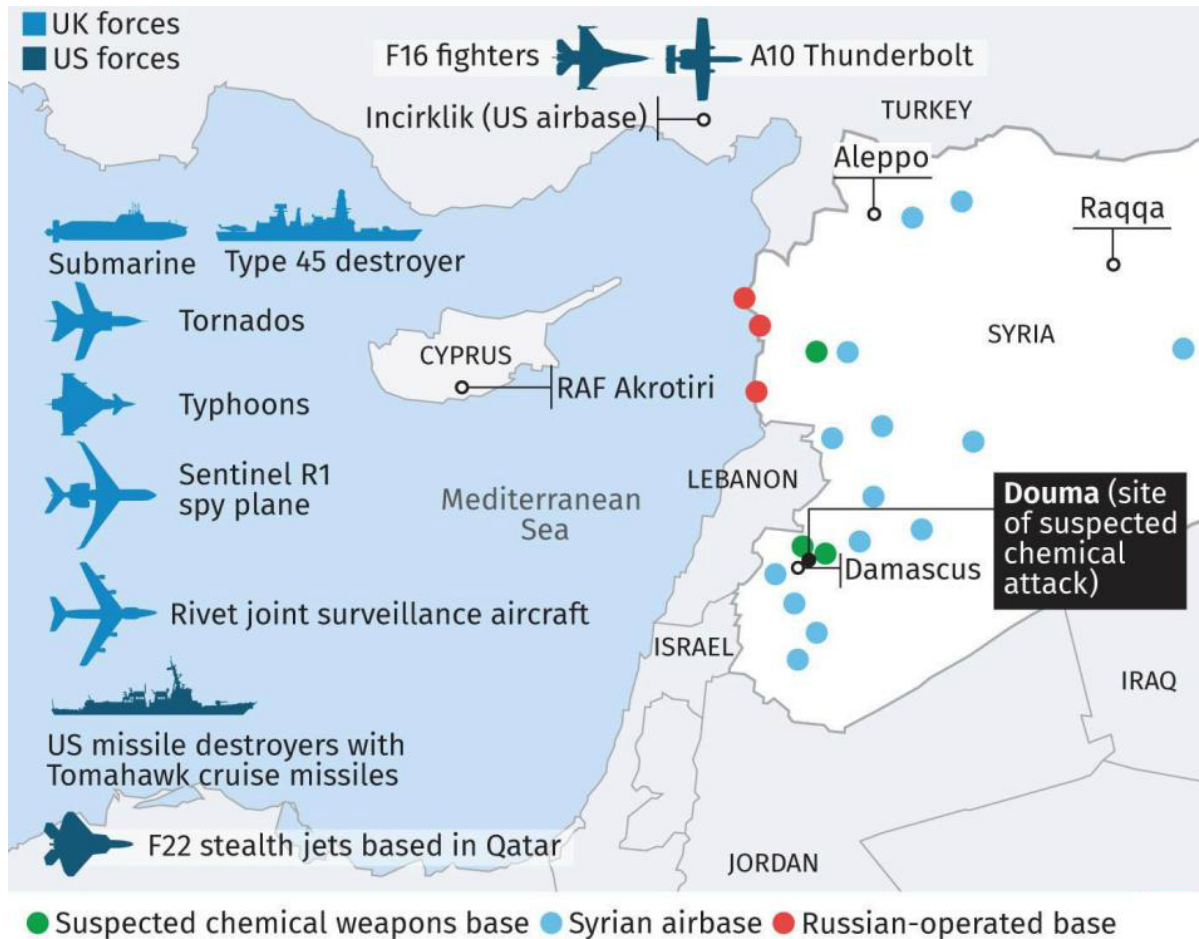


The 200 nautical mile zone would include the entire airspace of Lebanon, Jordan and Israel; half of Turkey and Iraq; and a portion of airspace over the LCCC/Nicosia FIR that covers the whole island of Cyprus!

The area may seem vast, but the possibility of further US, UK and French strikes against Syrian targets does still exist, as well as the Syrian military using surface-to-air missiles in response to any attacks.

During the airstrikes on April 14, the Syrian military reportedly used Russian-made missile systems to attempt to counter the strikes – these included missiles which have the capability to engage aircraft at altitudes well above FL900 and at ranges of around 190 miles.

While there is likely no intention to target civil aircraft, with all the missile defence activity going on in Syria and the spillover into neighbouring countries there still remains a risk of misidentification – and that's what the 200 nautical mile warning seeks to address.

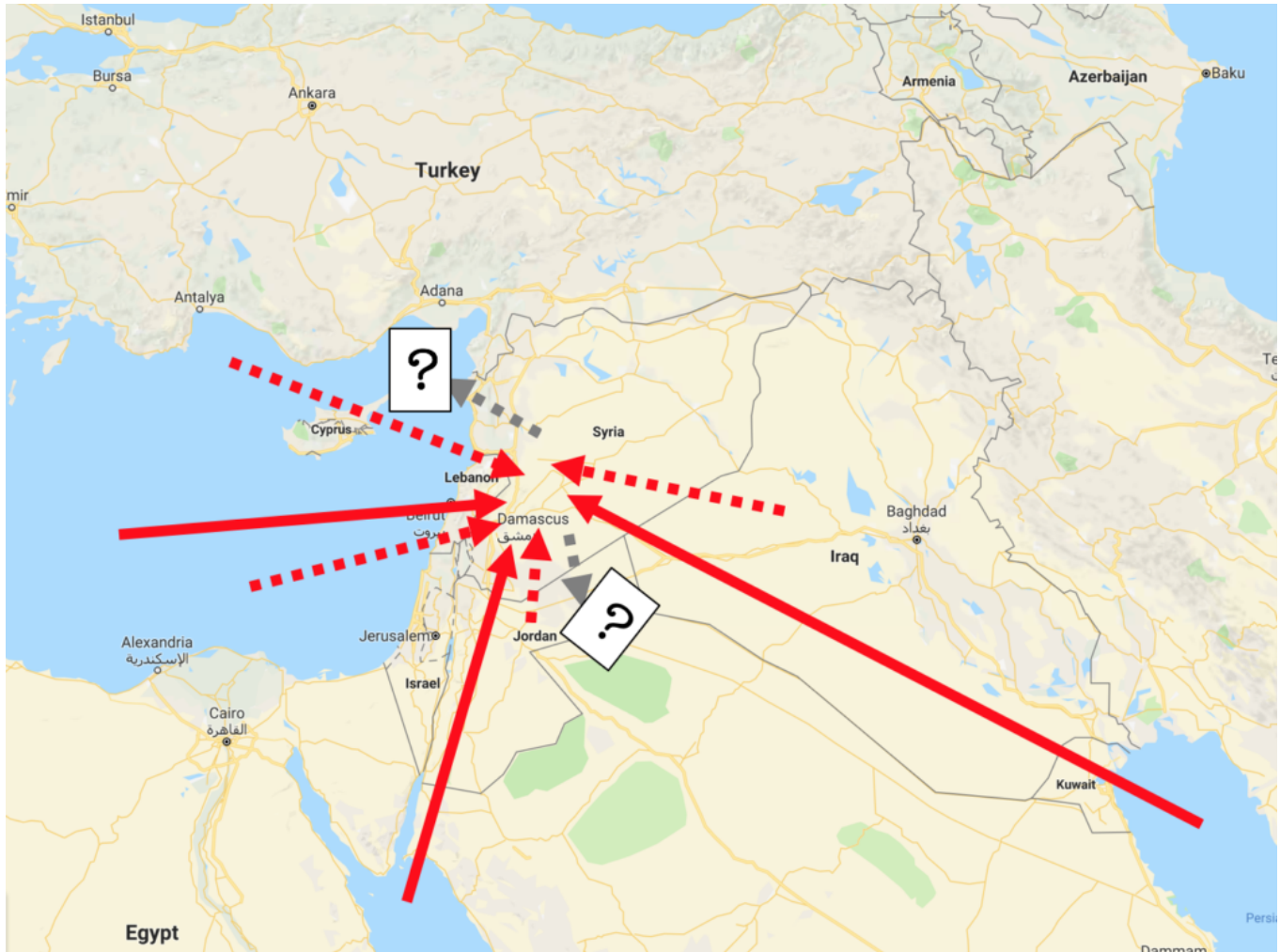


Amidst continued heavy military air presence in the region, almost all airlines are now avoiding Syrian airspace entirely. Lebanon's Beirut based MEA has now also re-routed all of their flights to avoid Syrian Airspace (was using it post recent attacks). Only local operators Fly Damas, Charm Wing Airlines, Syrian Air and Iran's Mahan Air continue to use the airspace.

Here's what the Pentagon had to say about the airstrikes on April 14:

- **105 missiles** were launched in the strikes against Syria. They included **30 Tomahawk missiles fired from** the USS Monterey and seven from the USS Laboon in the **Red Sea**. Another **23 Tomahawk missiles were launched from** the USS Higgins in the **North Arabian Gulf**.
- A submarine, USS John Warner, fired **six Tomahawk missiles from the eastern Mediterranean** and a French frigate in the same area fired another three missiles.
- At least one US Navy warship operating in the Red Sea participated in airstrikes, as well as US B-1 bombers.
- The air assault involved **two US B-1 Lancer bombers**, which fired **19 joint air to surface standoff missiles**. The **British** flew a combination of **Tornado and Typhoon jets**, firing **eight Storm Shadow missiles**, while **French** Rafale and Mirage fighter jets launched **nine SCALP missiles**.
- Four Royal Air Force Tornado GR4's were used in the strikes, launching Storm Shadow missiles at a "former missile base — some 15 miles west of Homs," according to the UK Ministry of Defense.

- **Syria fired 40 surface to air missiles 'at nothing'** after allied air strikes destroyed three Assad chemical sites.
- The United States remains **"locked and loaded"** to launch further attacks.
- **United States** and Allies **maintain positive posture of force** in the region, especially in the air.



*105 missiles launched from multiple locations in the region.
Over 40 Syrian surface to air missiles fired "at nothing".*

Further Reading:

- Everything We Know (And No One Has Said So Far) About The First Wave Of Air Strikes On Syria.
- US FAA KICZ Notam 9/18 - Syria.
- US FAA Background Notice.
- Safeairspace has been updated to reflect the latest information.
- And finally, just in case you were wondering what the airspace authorities in Cyprus have to say about all this, here's the superbly vague Notam they issued on the subject:

THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS IS CONTINUOUSLY MONITORING THE GEOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION AND WILL NOTIFY THE AVIATION COMMUNITY IF AND WHEN ANY RELEVANT AND RELIABLE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION IS TAKING ALL APPROPRIATE ACTION TO SAFEGUARD THE SAFETY OF FLIGHTS. 12 APR 15:25 2018 UNTIL 12 JUL 15:00 2018 ESTIMATED. CREATED: 12 APR 15:26 2018

If you have anything to share that we've missed, please tell us by email bulletin@fsbureau.org

Russia is not closing its airspace to American flights

Declan Selleck

9 May, 2018



On April 17, the Russian Ministry of Transport extended overflight approvals for US airlines through to October 28, 2018 - just hours before the old agreement on overflights was due to expire.

This should bring an end to the rumour that had been circulating all week that Russia has closed its airspace to US aircraft, and were denying overflights. There are a couple of unrelated events which caused this confusion:

1. US strikes on Syria on April 14, with rhetoric of Russia retaliation - which in the end didn't happen.
2. Spooked about how Russia might respond directly after the strikes, American Airlines temporarily decided not to overfly Russia on some of their flights from the US to Hong Kong... but then they quickly went back to doing so again on April 15.
3. With the deadline looming for extending the agreement, Russian civil aviation officials had reportedly

cancelled a meeting in Washington earlier this week to discuss renewing the agreement.

4. Some areas of the Baltic Sea are closed on April 19 for Russian missile firing, which is a routine event.

References - all the relevant stories are here:

- [Baltic airspace closure](#)
- [American airlines reroute](#)
- [Russia's refusal to attend aviation talks could lead to ban on US carriers in its airspace](#)

ICAO Raises Weight Threshold for Hardened Cockpit Door Requirement

OPSGROUP Team

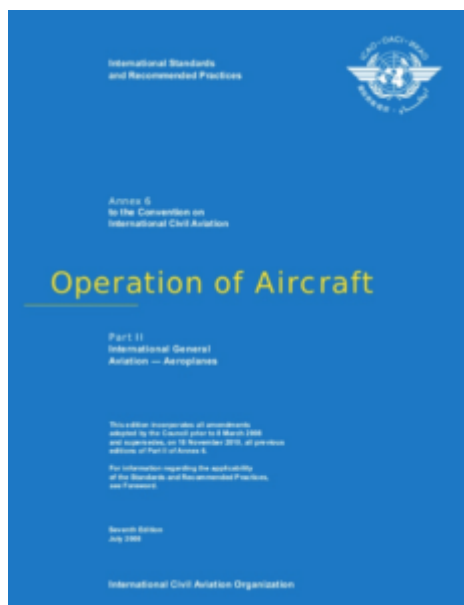
9 May, 2018





In Short: Following a three-year effort from industry groups and aircraft manufacturers, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will **raise the weight threshold for requiring hardened cockpit doors for aircraft with 19 or fewer passenger seats** from 45.5 metric tons (100,310 pounds) maximum certificated takeoff weight **to 54.5 metric tons (120,152 pounds)**.

This decision will enable the full type certification and worldwide use of current and future extended-range business aircraft such as the Bombardier Global 7000 and Gulfstream G650ER.



The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has changed its weight rules regarding strengthened cockpit doors on business jets. Toughened doors are required for aircraft operating charter flights.

Previous rules stated that hardened doors were needed for business jets with 19 seats or fewer, with a maximum take-off weight of 100,310lbs (45.5T). The new rules increase the maximum take-off weight to 120,152lbs (54.5T).

"This change maintains the security level intended by the original hardened cockpit door requirement, but recognizes the important distinction between airline service and business aircraft operations," said Sarah Wolf, CAM, NBAA senior manager of security and facilitation.

The International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), in concert with the International Coordinating Council of Aerospace Industries Associations and aircraft manufacturers, proposed the changes to Annex 6 Part 1 – International Commercial Air Transport.

"The effort took much planning and working through the full standard-making process at ICAO and shows ICAO recognition of greater operational capabilities and industry evolution," said IBAC Director General Kurt Edwards.

The new standard will become effective Jul 16, 2018, and applicable to member states in Nov 2018.



11APR: EASA missile warning for European airspace, Qatar airspace update, Italy ground handling strikes

Jamie Rose McMillen
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



Qatar airspace update – military jets intercepting civil flights



European air traffic warned over Syria strikes

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free version [here](#), or join thousands of your Pilot/Dispatcher/ATC/CAA/Flight Ops colleagues in **OPSGROUP** for the full weekly bulletin, airspace warnings, Ops guides, tools, maps, group discussion, Ask-us-Anything, and a ton more! **Curious? See what you get.** Rated **5 stars** by **125 reviews**.

LIZZ/Italy More strikes planned by ground staff at airports across the country on Apr 13. The airports expected to be worst affected are: LIML/Milan-Linate, LIMC/Milan-Malpensa, LIRP/Pisa, and LIRQ/Florence.

NFZZ/Fiji & Tonga Tropical Cyclone Keni is weakening as it moves away southwards from Fiji and Tonga, after bringing heavy rain and destructive winds to the islands from Apr 9-11. All airports are open and operational.

LROP/Bucharest The runways are in a state of disrepair, local reports of multiple blown tires in recent weeks due to potholes. B747-200/300/400 aircraft are effectively prohibited until Jul 4, as urgent maintenance work is now planned on both runways.

SPJC/Lima Due to the upcoming Summit of the Americas in Lima, no overnight parking allowed on the General Ramp between Apr 10-17. Overnight parking in a hangar or in the military zone is possible, contact: cco@atsaperu.com

SVZZ/Venezuela The Venezuelan Government has lifted the ban on flights to/from the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. However, a new diplomatic spat has started with Panama, with Venezuela banning Copa Airlines, and Panama banning several Venezuelan airlines in retaliation. So far, no restrictions announced for GA/BA flights between the two countries.

YBCG/Gold Coast Whilst the Commonwealth Games are going on, there's an ADIZ 90NM around the airport that will remain in place until Apr 15, and authorities are asking operators not to plan YBCG as an alternate. [Full details here](#).

LFZZ/France More Air France strikes planned on Apr 10-11, 17-18 and 23-24. So far with these strikes the impact each day seems to be fairly similar - around 30% of all Air France flights get cancelled, with the Paris airports particularly affected.

NZZZ/New Zealand New Zealand will be implementing PBN procedures across its airspace from Nov 2018. [Full details here](#).

EZZZ/Europe Military exercise 'Frisian Flag' will be taking place from Apr 9-20, mainly over Dutch/German airspace just off the north coast of Germany. Low impact expected overall, as exercise areas have been capped to FL240.

SCZZ/Chile The LATAM Airlines cabin crew strike will go ahead, from Apr 10-13, affecting all domestic flights and international connections in Chile.

OLZZ/Lebanon Possible new airspace safety risk in the OLBA/Beirut FIR, after the Syrian and Russian governments claimed that on Apr 9, Israeli fighter jets launched airstrikes on a Syrian military base from over Lebanese airspace. Israel has not yet responded to the claim.

KSBA/Santa Barbara The airport will be closed nightly from 5z-13z between Apr 9-13 for runway work.

RPZZ/Philippines The Philippine island of Boracay will be completely closed to tourists for six months, starting on Apr 26, following concerns of environmental damage. The government will use this time to clean up the island. All domestic carriers have already cut flights to Boracay's nearest airport, RPVE/Caticlan.

ENBR/Bergen From May 22 to Jun 15, the airport will be closed to all traffic, including emergency divers, each night from 2215-0400z Sun-Fri.

OAZZ/Afghanistan All flights need to file flight plans in advance to OAKXZQZX, OAKBZQZX, and OAKKZQZX for any flight in the OAKX/Kabul FIR.

EDDH/Hamburg PPR required for all flights with ICAO Aerodrome code C-F, except commercial flights. Call +49 40 5075 1110 or email at vvd@ham.airport.de. Will be in effect until Jul 4.

ZLLL/Lanzhou Airport to close daily from 1750-2230z, from Apr 11 to Jul 10.

VTZZ/Thailand Public holiday across Thailand from Apr 13-15, for the annual Songkran celebrations. The CAA will remain open throughout for issuing permits, but all Thai airports will be busy – apply for parking asap.

FAZZ/South Africa From 9-13 Apr, if you have any problems with slots, the phone numbers to contact will be different than normal. Call the Central Airspace Management Unit +27102072787 or +27822541955.

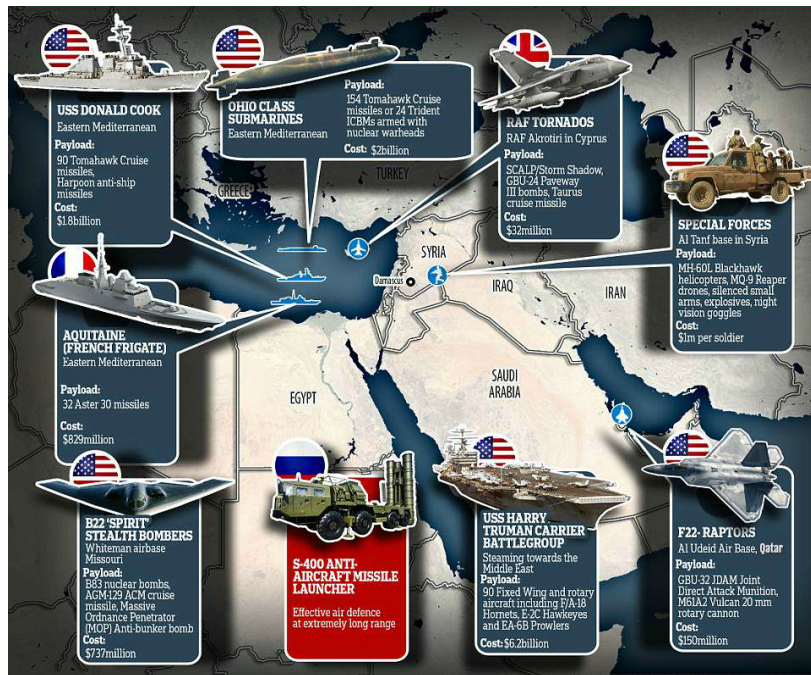
KCNY/Moab After being closed for three months of construction work, the airport is on schedule to re-open on May 1. The terminal is being upgraded, and the runway is being strengthened and widened from 75ft to 100ft.

DNAS/Asaba The airport will be completely closed for repair, from Apr 9 to May 15.

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European air traffic warned over Syria strikes

David Mumford
9 May, 2018



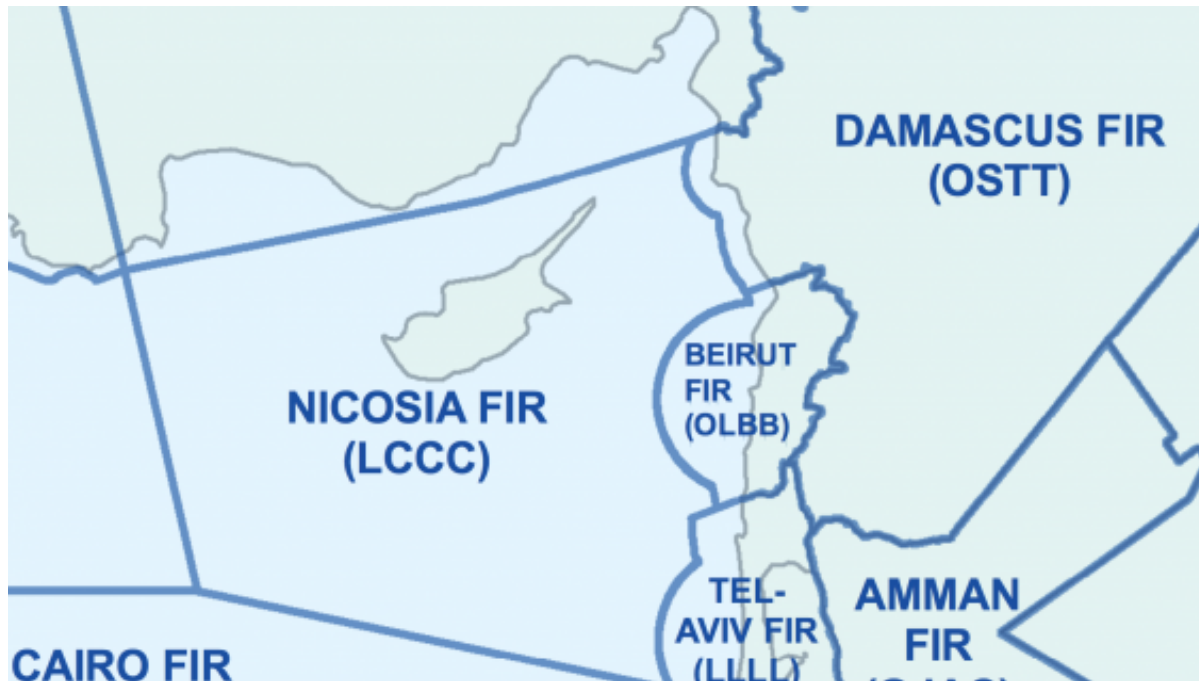
EASA are warning of possible air strikes into Syria being launched from locations within the LCCC/Nicosia FIR over the next 72 hours (Apr 11-14).

Eurocontrol have published a 'Rapid Alert Notification' on their website, with a statement from EASA that reads:

"Due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria with air-to-ground and / or cruise missiles within the next 72 hours, and the possibility of intermittent disruption of radio navigation equipment, due consideration needs to be taken when planning flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean / Nicosia FIR area."

Very few commercial flights operate over Syria, and authorities in the US, UK, France and Germany have all previously issued warnings for Syrian airspace.

But many airlines regularly transit the LCCC/Nicosia FIR: there are frequent holiday flights to the main Cypriot airports of LCLK/Larnaca and LCPH/Paphos; overflight traffic from Europe to the likes of OLBA/Beirut, OJAI/Amman and LLBG/Tel Aviv; as well as traffic from Istanbul heading south to the Gulf and beyond.



Last year, two US warships in the eastern Mediterranean fired missiles at an air base in Syria after a chemical weapons attack by the Assad regime killed more than 80 people.

This week, following another suspected chemical attack by the Syrian government against civilians in a rebel-held town in Syria, the US President Donald Trump warned there would be a “forceful” response. On Apr 11, he took to Twitter to warn Russia to prepare for strike on Syria:



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and “smart!” You shouldn’t be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!

11:57 AM - 11 Apr 2018

For the airstrikes on Syria last year, the US gave Russia advance warning of the attack, and Russian forces opted not to attempt to shoot down the missiles using its air defence systems stationed in the region.

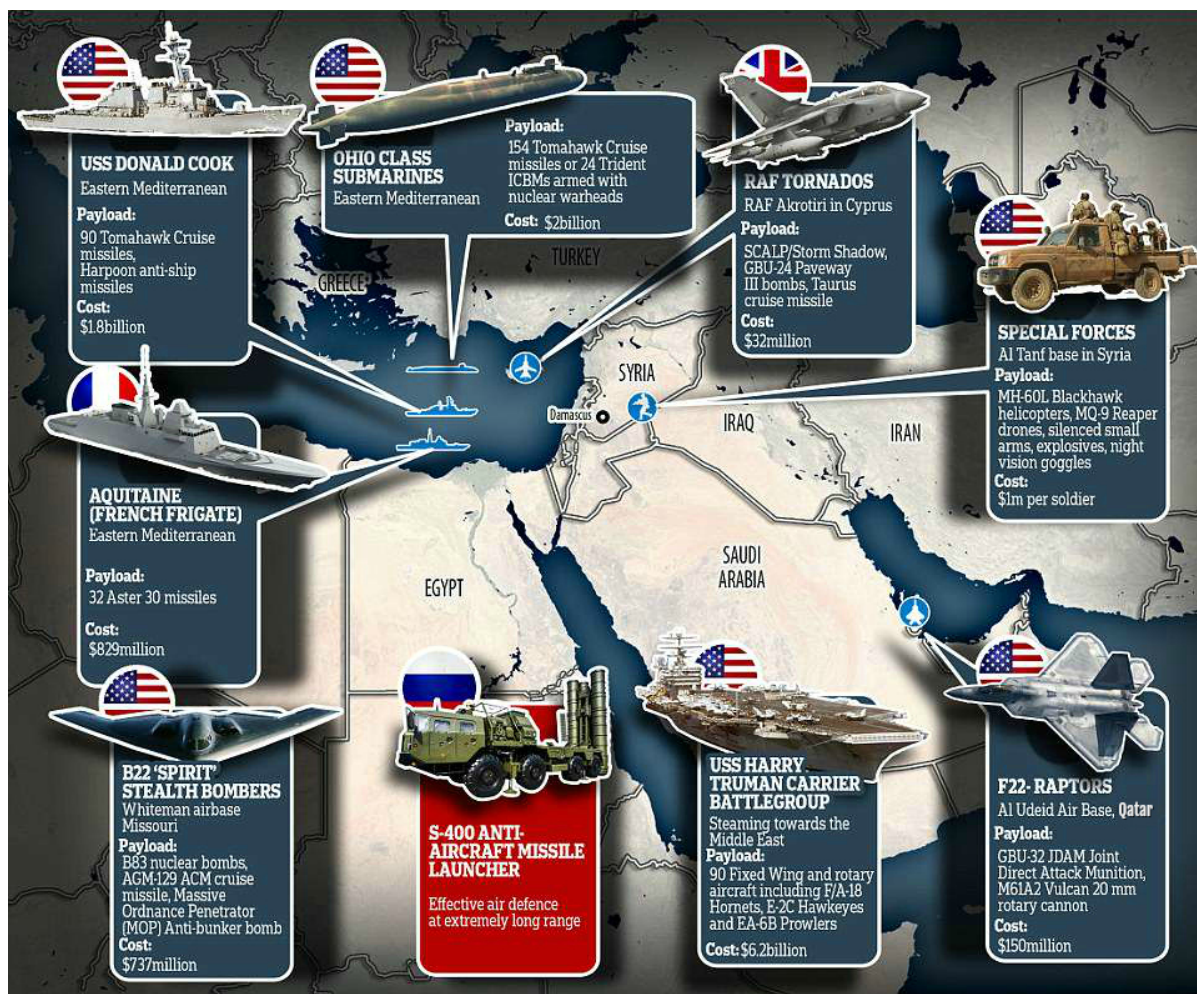
However, this time round things could be very different. This week, Russia’s ambassador to Lebanon reminded the US that the head of the Russian military has said his forces in Syria would not only shoot down any missiles that threatened them but would target the source of the weapons as well.

The only US warship currently in the Mediterranean and capable of a possible strike is the USS Donald Cook, which left port in Larnaca and started to patrol in vicinity of Syria on Apr 9. According to some reports, it has since weighed anchor off Syrian territorial waters, and has been “buzzed” by low-flying Russian military jets.

Another 3 warships of the Sixth Fleet are already in the Atlantic Ocean, and on Apr 11 the entire US Truman Fleet (including an aircraft carrier, 6 destroyers, and nearly 6,500 sailors) departed Norfolk,

Virginia, to head to the Mediterranean Sea. However, it may take up to a week for any of these warships to arrive.

Here's an overview of US and coalition forces' military options currently thought to be on offer in the eastern Mediterranean:



With the downing of MH17 by a surface-to-air missile over Ukraine in 2014, as well as all the recent unannounced missile tests by North Korea, there has been increased focus by the aviation community on the risks posed by conflict zones. If any missiles are launched from the Eastern Mediterranean in the next few days, be prepared for possible last-minute reroutes, as any Notams that get published may not give much warning.

Further reading:

One of our biggest missions in OPSGROUP is to share risk information and keep operators aware of the current threat picture. Check out Safeairspace for the most up-to-date information on airspace safety around the world.

Qatar airspace update - military jets

intercepting civil flights

OPSGROUP Team

9 May, 2018



In short: The situation is **volatile** and constantly changing, even by the hour. **Military interception has been reported** so the best advice is to be vigilant with sticking to assigned routes for all operations around the region.

The airspace blockade of Qatar has been ongoing since June 2017 with little end in sight.



But over the past few months, tensions have been escalating;

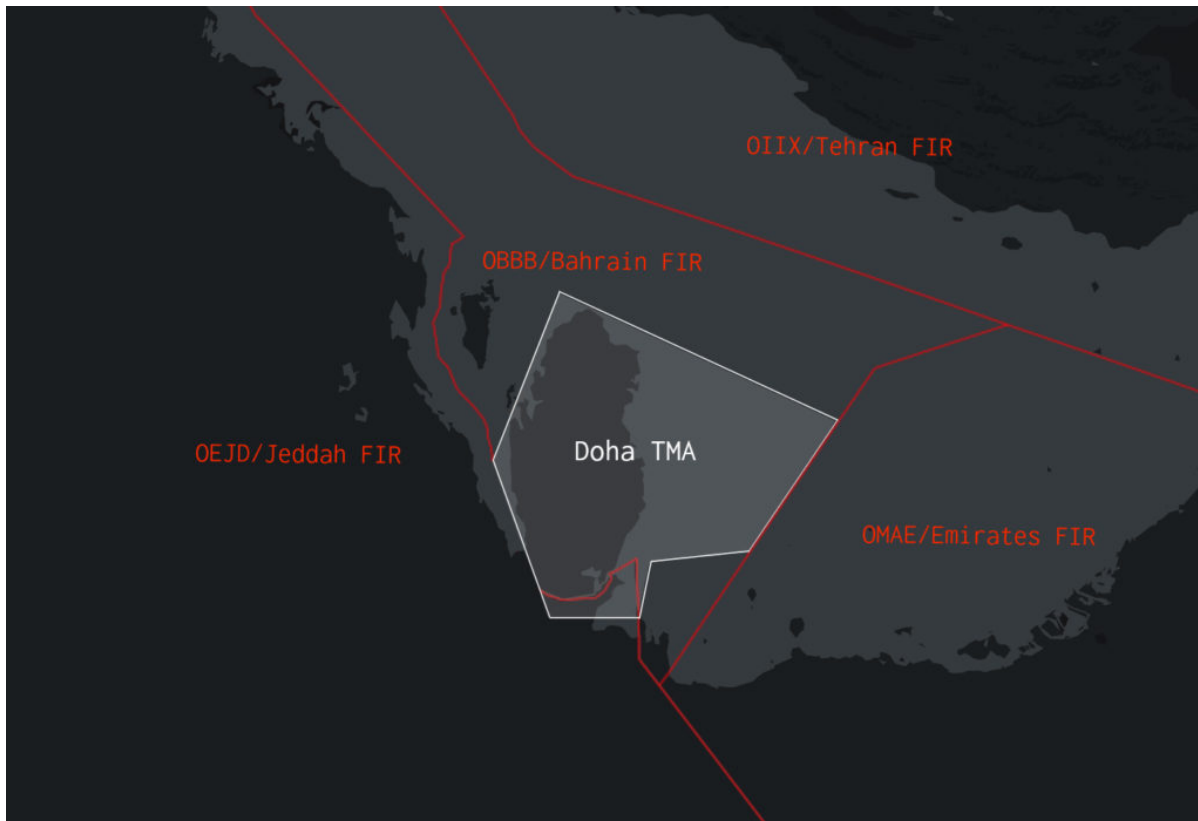
- A **Saudi** newspaper reports of a potential project to attempt to turn Qatar into an island!
- The **UAE** General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) has lodged a complaint with ICAO after an incident last week in which two Qatari jets came “dangerously close” to two civilian aircraft from the UAE. Qatar’s Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) said the Emirati statement was an attempt to cover up the UAE’s multiple breaches of Qatari airspace.
- The Kingdom of **Bahrain** has also officially complained to ICAO alleging that “two Qatari warplanes were detected flying at an altitude of 30,000 feet above the international waters, within Bahrain Flight Information Region (FIR) without any prior authorization. The two fighters flew deliberately under a UAE Airbus A320, with ident/call sign of A6HMS, en route

from Fujairah to Rome.”

- **Qatar** has itself complained to the UN Security Council against Bahrain, accusing a fighter jet belonging to Bahrain of violating its airspace at the weekend.
- In response, **ICAO** is working to organise a regional meeting for Gulf civil aviation and air traffic authorities in the next few weeks, as part of broader efforts to improve communication.

Here is the latest operational information we have:

A reminder that Qatar does not have its own FIR. It sits entirely within the Bahrain FIR- you will find Qatar airspace NOTAMs under OBBB. The Doha TMA extends SFC to FL245. Above this sits the Bahrain UIR.



Bahrain and Egypt have relaxed some of their initial restrictions. Saudi and UAE have not.

The current state of play as of **6 April 2018**.

Have you been through the region recently? Can you provide an update?

Extra Reading:

Some fascinating reporting about what this whole blockade is all about.

- ***“How a ransom for Royal falconers reshaped the Middle East”*** – New York Times
- ***“What the falcons up with Qatar?”*** – NPR Podcast

Maldives - Civil Unrest Update

OPSGROUP Team

9 May, 2018



In short: Civil unrest has calmed and state of emergency lifted on March 22, 2018. No impact at Malé International Airport or outlying islands or resorts. #OpsNormal.



The Maldives, a country known far more as a honeymoon hotspot in the Indian Ocean than as a hub of political crisis, is back to “business as usual,” according to its president, Abdulla Yameen, following the lifting of a 45-day state of emergency on March 22.

Latest Updates:

- After the Maldivian government declared a state of emergency in February, tourists around the world are canceling their beachfront vacations in droves. The blow to the Maldives’ tourism industry is significant, as it accounts for over 30% of the country’s gross domestic product, reaching \$3.5 billion in 2017. Ratings agency Moody’s has said it will lower its 4.5% growth forecast for 2018 if tourists avoid the island nation for a prolonged period.
- On 22 March 2018, the state of emergency in Maldives was lifted. There could still be further anti-government protests in the capital Malé and a number of other towns. Recent protests

have resulted in pepper spray being used by the security forces. You should exercise caution and avoid any protests or rallies. There are no reports that outlying islands, resorts or Malé International Airport have been affected.

- Some local airlines have suspended flights to China due to the on-going unrest and decline in tourism numbers.



Extra Reading:

- U.S. Department of State – Maldives Travel Advisory | *“Level 2: Exercise increased caution”*
- British Foreign & Commonwealth Office – Foreign Travel Advice Maldives | *“Exercise caution”*
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs – Maldives | *“Exercise normal safety precautions”*

Have you been through the Maldives lately and can you update opsgroup members on the latest?

05APR: Breathalyzer tests at German ramp checks, Himalayan routings, Europe fixes its big slot computer

Jamie Rose McMillen
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



Expect breathalyzer during German Ramp checks



L888 - The Silk Road Airway

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EZZZ/Europe Normal operation has resumed after a day of disruption on Apr 3, due to a fault with the system that allocates ATC slots to flights, and therefore manages the flow of traffic across Europe. The system is now back online and working properly again.

LFZZ/France The ATC strike in the LFMM/Marseille ACC is still currently planned to go ahead – from 04z on Apr 7 to 04z on April 9. As usual, it won't be known until the day how many controllers go on strike, but expect disruption.

LIZZ/Italy More strikes planned by ground staff at airports across the country on Apr 13. The airports expected to be worst affected are: LIMC/Milan-Linate, LIML/Pisa, and LIRQ/Florence.

UMKK/Kaliningrad Russian military exercises planned over parts of the Baltic Sea from Apr 3-7, with airspace warnings issued for 6-18z each day, SFC-FL590. Main area affected will be the UMKK/Kaliningrad FIR, where half the airways will be closed. Small bits of airspace in neighbouring FIR's will also be affected, and Notams have been issued by EVRR/Riga, EPWW/Warsaw and ESAA/Sweden FIR's to show where the danger areas are.

KSDM/San Diego CBP have reached an agreement with the city, so no longer plan to close Customs at the airport. GA operators can therefore continue to use SDM as a port of entry.

KIMT/Ford The airport will be completely closed for runway repairs, from Apr 30 to May 14.

EGPH/Edinburgh Due to ongoing construction work to expand the terminal, no GA overnight parking allowed until Jul 3. The Signature FBO has three stands available for quick turnarounds during the day, but

landing slots will be limited if those stands are occupied.

WSSS/Singapore From Apr 23, 2018, departure clearance via datalink will become possible on certain airways: A457, B466, B469, M751, B470. Full details [here](#).

VCBI/Colombo The strike by airport employees has been called off late on Apr 3, avoiding an indefinite strike.

VHZZ/Hong Kong In 2017, airspace safety incidents in Hong Kong airspace rose to a six-year high, following the introduction of a controversial new air traffic management system in late 2016. In 2017, there were 17 'loss of separation' incidents – up from 10 in 2016 when the old system was still in use.

TTZZ/Trinidad and Tobago CPDLC outage has been extended until the end of June. All voice comms must be made via New York Radio. Aircraft are requested to log on to TTZP for ADS-C position reporting. Also, include the AFTN address KNYCZZZX when filing your flight plans.

EGZZ/UK London Terminal ATC will be switching from paper strips to manual strips (called EXCDS) from Apr 4. 20% reduction in traffic for the first 10 days, then 10% for the next 10. Some delays expected. More info at: <https://www.nats.aero/excds/>

YZZZ/Australia Tropical Storm Iris is siting off Queensland, forecasters uncertain as to tracking but warnings issued for Whitsunday Islands area. Max winds 40G55kts at 1800Z on Apr 5.

NFZZ/Fiji Heavy flooding on Apr 1, after Tropical Cyclone Josie passed by to the southeast of the island. The northern towns of Nadi and Ba are worst affected, where the floods killed four people. Many roads remain closed, although water levels have receded. Both NFFN/Nadi and NFNA/Nausori remain open and operational.

LFZZ/France More Air France strikes planned on Apr 7, 10 and 11. Impact likely to be similar to the ones held in March, which saw around 30% of Air France flights cancelled, with the Paris airports particularly affected.

HEZZ/Egypt The FAA has extended its airspace warning for the Sinai Peninsula by another year, due to continuing concern for flight safety. The updated Notam says US carriers should avoid overflying the Sinai Peninsula below FL260, and if planning to do so must provide 3 days notice to the FAA. More at: <http://safeairspace.net/information/egypt/>

VABB/Mumbai Expect disruption on Apr 9 & 10, when the airport will be closed each day from 0530-1130z (1100-1700 local time) for scheduled runway maintenance ahead of the monsoon season, which spans from May to September.

ESZZ/Sweden Sweden introduced a new passenger tax on Apr 1, for commercial flights departing Swedish airports on aircraft with more than 10 seats. For flights to European countries, the tax rate will be 60 SEK per passenger (\$7.50), and for pretty much all other destinations it will be 250 SEK per passenger (\$31.50). Foreign airlines and charter operators flying to Sweden must now apply for a Swedish company registration number, and register for aviation tax as soon as possible.

HLMS/Misurata On Apr 1, the airport briefly suspended operations and redirected flights to HLLM/Mitiga, when an armed group entered the airport, demanding the release of two members of a local militia.

OTZZ/Qatar The UAE has filed another formal complaint with ICAO, claiming that on Mar 26, Qatari fighter jets once again flew dangerously close to an Emirates scheduled passenger aircraft over Bahrain. Qatar deny the claim, calling it an attempt to cover-up previous violations by UAE military aircraft of Qatari airspace.

LDZA/Zagreb The airport's only runway will be closed to all traffic, including emergency divers, each

night from Apr 4 to May 31. The closure times will be 2035-0435z, except on Mon & Fri when it will be 2200-0435z.

LDRI/Rijeka The airport will move to H24 ops starting Apr 4, to compensate for the nightly closure of LDZA/Zagreb.

EGFF/Cardiff The airport is closed nightly Apr 5-7 from 2200-0500z, but you can get PPR either side of that closure, between 2200-2320z and 0400-0500z.

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Here's what happens when Europe's slot system crashes

David Mumford
9 May, 2018



On 3rd April 2018, a failure with the central European slot computer plunged the entire ATC system into crisis mode, with multiple knock on effects. Here's what happened:

1. The system that allocates ATC slots to flights, and therefore manages the flow of traffic across Europe, **failed at 1026 UTC**. It's called the ETFMS (Enhanced Tactical Flow Management System), but aka "The Slot Computer"
2. There is a **Contingency Plan** for this situation. Airports are supposed to use this, which gives a quick table of departure intervals allowed according to the destination. You can view the plan [here](http://www.eurocontrol.int/publications/network-manager-atfcm-procedural-contingency-plan) and see what it looks like for all the main airports: **<http://www.eurocontrol.int/publications/network-manager-atfcm-procedural-contingency-plan>**
3. Some airlines reported that Istanbul, amongst others, were initially **holding all departures**, as local authorities were not well versed in the Contingency Plan and were unclear as to how to handle the situation. Eurocontrol then started calling round the 70 main airports to make sure they knew what they were supposed to do!
4. **All flight plans filed before 1026Z were lost**. Operators were instructed to re-file all their FPL's, as well as those for the rest of the day, as Eurocontrol said they would only switch back on the slot computer once they reached a critical mass of filed flight plans in the system.
5. With the Contingency Plan in place, there was around a **10% total capacity reduction** across the whole of Europe. Actual delay numbers - usually available on the NOP - were impossible to verify, because of all the missing FPL's in the system.
6. Normally, Eurocontrol will re-address your FPL to ATC Centres **outside the IFPZ**. During the slot computer outage, operators had to do this manually, ie. find the FIR's they would cross, get their AFTN addresses (like HECCZQZX), and send them their FPL.
7. The actual system failure was **fixed at around 1400Z**, but only went back online at around 1800Z, after it had been thoroughly tested and Eurocontrol were happy there were enough FPL's back in the system.

In over 20 years of operation, Eurocontrol said "the ETFMS has only had one other outage which occurred in 2001. The system currently manages up to 36,000 flights a day."

Expect breathalyzer during German Ramp checks

David Mumford
9 May, 2018



German authorities confirm they have been conducting random breathalyzer tests during ramp checks since as far back as Jan 2017, despite this not being part of the official EU SAFA ramp inspection guidelines.

In Dec 2016, following the accident of the Germanwings Flight 9525, EASA published **a proposal to the European Commission** to better support pilot mental fitness. One of their recommendations was to introduce random alcohol screening as a part of ramp checks within the EU.

Although that proposal has still not been adopted yet, local authorities in Germany say they can still perform these tests on the basis of German national law alone.

Have you had a recent ramp check anywhere with any surprise items not part of the standard checklist? Comment below...

Further reading

- **Official SAFA/SACA site at EASA**
- **Our advice on how to make a ramp check painless**
- **Opsgroup's SAFA ramp inspection checklist**

Singapore Changi (WSSS) Departure Clearance by Datalink

Cynthia Claros
9 May, 2018



Starting **April 23rd, 2018**, Changi Airport (WSSS) will begin giving departure clearance (DCL) via datalink, on certain routes. The idea is to clear up voice communications when DCL can be used. Full details listed in CAAS AIP SUP 013/2018.

To use this, you'll need ACARS, and be compliant with EUROCAE ED85-A. You'll login to the ground system at WSSS.

The departures are as below:

- Destinations in Peninsular Malaysia via ATS Routes A457 and B466
- Destinations in Thailand via ATS Routes B466 and B469 / M751
- Destinations in Indonesia via ATS Route A457, R469 and B470
- Destinations in Australia and New Zealand via ATS Route B470
- Flights with allocated Calculated Take-Off Time (CTOT) under Bay of Bengal Cooperative Air Traffic Flow Management (BOBCAT)

A few other notes:

-The DCL message will not include requested cruising levels and final cruising levels. Your planned flight level in 15b will be used, and ATC will give cruise FL when airborne. Sounds like they won't entertain any requests for a different FL while on the ground.

-No revisions allowed over datalink, all changes must be made by voice comms.

-Make your request with RCD message (see format in attached AIC) no more than 20 minutes before TOBT. If you've got a CTOT under BOBCAT, you'll need to put that in the message. If you're routing via ANITO B470, list your FL at ANITO crossing.

If your DCL is rejected, you'll get a "revert to voice procedures" message. A few auto-rejects:

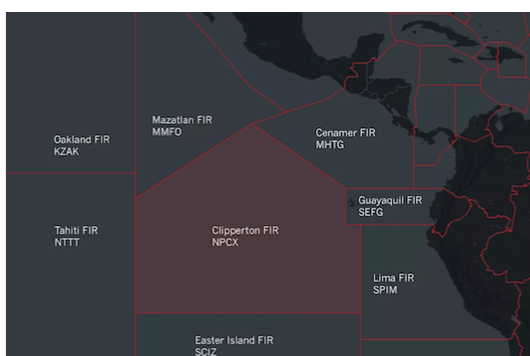
- Flight routes not applicable.
- RCD message doesn't comply with ED-85A or inaccurate data.
- Invalid TOBT
- When required due to flow restrictions.

Operating out of WSSS soon? CAAS AIP SUP 013/2018 is worth a read.

01APR: New Oceanic Control Area started ops last night, Greek Charter rules

Cynthia Claros
9 May, 2018

International Ops Bulletin



FSB and OPSGROUP win bid to control 1.8 million km area of Pacific Airspace



Charter flights to Greece now need an annual license

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TNCM/Saint Martin The airport's commercial terminal was heavily damaged by Hurricane Irma in Sept, and once the airport reopened to commercial flights in Oct, all arriving aircraft were having to be processed through the FBOs instead. But now temporary arrivals and departures facilities have finally been opened for commercial flights, so the FBO's will return to exclusively supporting private aviation again.

NPCX/Clipperton Oceanic OPSGROUP finally has its own airspace. We're delighted to make public, after 18 months of negotiation with the local Department of Civil Aviation (DCA), that control of the Clipperton FIR has been assigned to FSB. Operations commenced last night at 2359Z. Read our article, or the official Press Release on the DCA website.

FM CZ/Mayotte Civil unrest and an indefinite general strike continues in Mayotte, with protests and roadblocks on major roads including those around the airport, as well as the capital, Mamoudzou.

SCZZ/Chile ADS-C and CPDLC are now available for FANS-1/A capable aircraft across all of Chile's oceanic FIR's (SCIZ/Isla de Pascua, SCFZ/Antofagasta, SCEZ/Santiago, SCTZ/Puerto Montt, and SCCZ/Punta Arenas), except on airways UL302, L302, UL780, and L780. There's a single CPDLC logon code for all these areas: SCEZ.

LFZZ/France Another ATC strike has been announced, this time just for the LFMM/Marseille ACC, from 04z on Apr 7 to 04z on April 9. If the strike goes ahead, overflight traffic should route around the LFMM sector during this period.

LEZZ/Spain CPDLC is now available above FL285 across Spanish airspace for CPDLC ATN VDL Mode 2 equipped aircraft. The logon code for the Madrid FIR is LECM, and for the Barcelona FIR is LECB.

TTZZ/Piarco CPDLC is out of service until the end of March. All voice comms must be made via New York Radio. Aircraft are requested to log on to TTZP for ADS-C position reporting. Also, include the AFTN address KNYCZZZX when filing your flight plans.

VEPT/Patna From Mar 25 onwards, the airport will now be open 24/7.

OEZZ/Saudi Arabia The Saudi government have confirmed that on Mar 25, seven ballistic missiles were fired toward Saudi Arabia from within Yemen. The rebels said they were targeting OERK/Riyadh Airport and other sites in the capital. All seven missiles were intercepted and destroyed, although one person died and two more were injured by falling fragments of one missile over a residential neighbourhood in Riyadh.

DNZZ/Nigeria Workers' unions in the aviation industry have threatened to shut the airspace and ground all flight activities in protest against the Federal Government's refusal to pay pension money owed to Nigeria Airways ex-workers. This "indefinite industrial action" is due to start on Apr 2, unless an agreement is reached.

OPRN/Islamabad Ongoing fuel supply issues. There's a Notam out that says all aircraft must currently tanker in sufficient fuel for their outbound flight.

ZZZZ/Worldwide ICAO will raise the weight threshold requirement for hardened cockpit doors for aircraft with 19 or fewer seats from 100,310 pounds (45.5 metric tons) MTOW to 120,152 pounds (54.5 metric tons). This means that current and future ultra-long-range business jets, including the G650ER and Global 7000 will no longer need to meet this requirement. The new standard will become effective Jul 16, 2018, and applicable to member states in Nov 2018.

DTZZ/Tunisia The strike by ATC Technicians originally planned for Mar 23-25 has now been rescheduled for Apr 6-8. They postponed it to facilitate further talks between participating unions and employers over a range of grievances. If the strike goes ahead, it is not yet clear whether specific airports will be affected.

ORZZ/Iraq Turkey have only partially followed the lead of the Iraqi government's decision to re-open the Kurdish airports ORER/Erbil and ORSU/Sulaymaniyah to international flights. Turkey will now start allowing flights to ORER/Erbil to use its airspace, but not flights to ORSU/Sulaymaniyah - citing their ongoing concerns about terrorism in Sulaymaniyah.

OEZZ/Saudi Arabia On Mar 22, Air India made history by becoming the first commercial flight to be allowed to use Saudi airspace, on a route between VIDP/Delhi and LLBG/Tel Aviv. However, Israeli flag carrier El Al has not been given similar permission, and must still take a more circuitous path to avoid Saudi Arabia, adding hours to the flight time.

KZZZ/USA With the roll-out of PBCS coming on Mar 29, the FAA requires N-reg operators to update their A056 LOA authorization, but they are delaying the renewal deadline to Sep 30 for private (Part 91) operators only. Notice N 8900.445 has now been updated, and is available here: http://fsims.faa.gov/wdocs/notices/n8900_455.pdf

VICG/Chandigarh Following a similar closure in Feb, the airport will be completely closed for more runway extension work from May 12-31.

KORD/Chicago RWY 15/33, one of the airport's longest runways since O'Hare opened, will close permanently on Mar 29. After that, most traffic requiring extra-long runways will then be shifted to east-west runways 10L/28R and 10C/28C. Some of the pavement lane of runway 15/33 will survive as a taxiway ("Sierra-Sierra").

EKZZ/Denmark A strike threat from the meteorological service and ATC could end up paralysing air traffic in Denmark, if an agreement is not reached before Apr 4. If this were to happen, internal flights in Greenland would also be suspended – as airspace here is also run by the same authority.

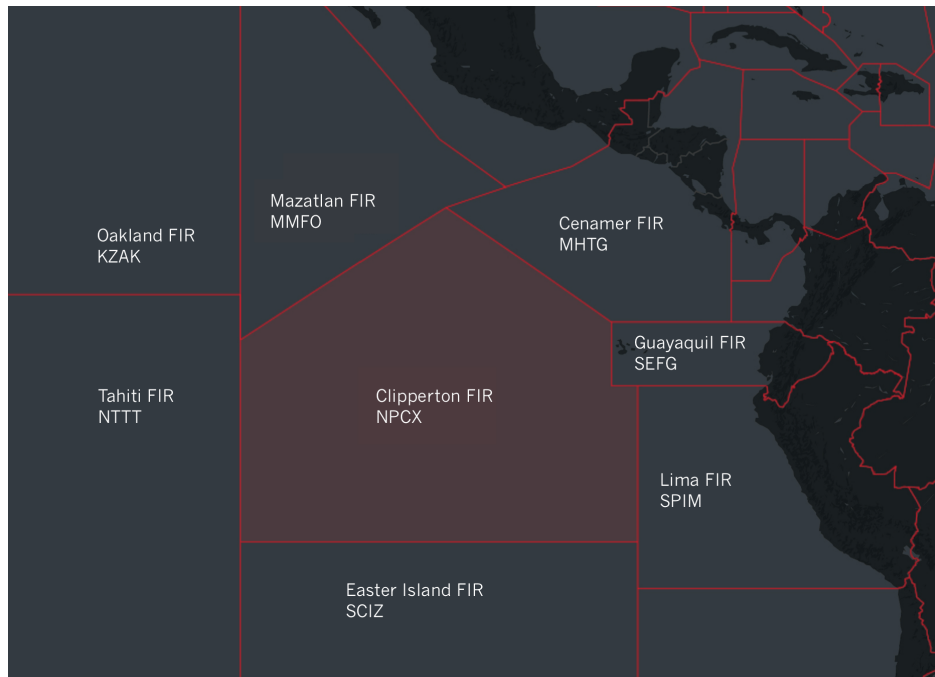
HUEN/Entebbe Uganda's Civil Aviation Authority has announced that it has launched an investigation into extortion activities by airport staff following a reported incident on Mar 18, where ground handling staff are alleged to have prevented a passenger from boarding a flight to China because he had a one-way ticket and lacked proper documentation, unless the passenger paid a fine of 200 U.S. dollars.

VRZZ/Maldives A state of emergency that had been in place for 45 days amidst political unrest was lifted on Mar 22. There are still some travel advisories in place for the capital Male and Addu City (Addu atoll), but disruption is not expected anywhere else – even throughout the duration of the state of emergency there were no reports that any of the outlying islands, resorts or VRMM/Malé International Airport were affected.

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OPSGROUP wins bid to control 1.8 million km area of Pacific Airspace

Declan Selleck
9 May, 2018



1st April 2018: Clipperton Oceanic starts operations today, and is the world's newest piece of airspace!

This one is different though - the users are in charge.

OPSGROUP take official control today of the Clipperton Flight Information Region (FIR) in the South Pacific, a 1.8 million square kilometre chunk of airspace west of the Galapagos Islands and north of Tahiti. The FIR has been unused since 1958, when the Clipperton Oceanic centre and radio service closed.

Announcing the news in an official Press Release, **Francois Renard, PM of the Clipperton Government** said: "We are a little island but we are proud of our history in Pacific aviation. The years from 1937-1958, when Clipperton Oceanic was a name known to all passing aircraft, are looked back on fondly here. Now, we look forward - to a resumption of traffic on these once busy routes, and we are confident that OPSGROUP is the key to making this happen".

For the first time, regulations are set by the users. There is no requirement for PBCS, RNP, ADS-B, ADS-C, GNS, GNSS, HLA, MNPS, RLAT, RLON, SLOP, or any of the other exponentially increasing acronyms that operators struggle to keep up with. No LOA's, no slots, no delays. And no ramp checks. There are no Notams. Although it is large, it's a simple piece of airspace, and that allows for a simple approach.

Juergen Meyer, a Lufthansa A350 Captain, and a long standing OpsGroup member said: "We've seen enough. Ercan (the Cyprus based Turkish ATC centre) doesn't officially exist, yet you have to call them every time. French Guyana seems to have abandoned their ATC centre. Several African countries have outsourced their entire Permit Department, meaning you have to pay extortionate amounts just to secure a routine overflight. Greece and Turkey continue to hijack the Notam system for a diplomatic war. CASA Australia, like many others, continues to publish absolutely unreadable Notams, endangering safety. Nobody dares to enter the Simferopol FIR. The French ATC service is on strike more often than they are not. Libya lies about the security risks at their airports. Egypt and Kenya refuse to publish safety information because it would harm their tourism."

Jack Peterson, an Auckland based operator of 2 G550's, said: "If all these agencies can exist with a poor service, then why not try something different? Clipperton puts the users in charge, and we get to decide whether any of these rules or procedures actually serve us. Now that we have our own airspace, we can make it safe and user-friendly rather than user-hostile. And the South Pacific is the perfect place to start."

OPSGROUP has also banned Ramp Checks within the region, a practice where pilots are taken hostage by the local Civil Aviation Authority during routine flights, and held accountable for the mistakes of their company, not being released from the ordeal until they submit with a signature.

The Clipperton FIR has a chequered history.

The island is named after a Pirate (John Clipperton). First activated in 1937, Clipperton Oceanic Radio provided a Flight Information and Weather service to trans-Pacific flights for 21 years, until it lost funding from a French-British-American government coalition in 1958.

In 1967, the **Soviet Union** attempted to takeover the airspace, offering to build several Surveillance Radars on the island. That was seen by the United Nations as a cover story, with their interest being more likely centred on having additional monitoring territory proximate to the US.

Since then, the Flight Information Region has remained dormant, appearing in most Flight Planning systems as “XX04”. Until the agreement with FSB, no service of any kind was provided.

The move has been seen by some observers as similar to the delegation of control of Kosovo airspace to Hungary in 2013, under a 5-year agreement that will likely be extended. Reinhard Kettu, newly appointed Oceanic Director, FSB, commented: “It’s not really the same thing. The Kosovo thing was just a delegation of Air Traffic Control, and at that, just for civil aircraft. Here, in Clipperton, FSB is taking full control of the aviation system. That will allow us to introduce an across-the-board user-first system.

On the Notam issue, OPSGROUP founder Mark Zee commented: “We’ve made things really simple here. Critical Notams, for the most part, tell us of a binary Yes/No for availability. Runway closed, ILS unavailable, Frequency u/s. It’s basically an On/Off switch, and the existing system handles that pretty well. When it comes to everything else, they fail, badly. So much rubbish about unlit towers, cranes, birds, and the rest. That makes up the noise. So, we’ve banned them in this new airspace, while we work on a better system. We will notify operators through the DCA of any withdrawn essential service or facility, for example if our HF is broken. Nothing else.”

Operationally, there are two new airways, UN351 and UN477, with 8 associated waypoints. HF is provided on the South Pacific MWARA Network, on the same frequencies as Auckland, Brisbane, Nadi, and Tahiti – 5643 and 8867 will be the primary ones.

Flight plans should be addressed to NPCXZQZX and NPCXZOZX. Although only HF is required to enter the airspace, CPDLC is provided and the AFN logon is NPCX. To begin, only a Flight Information Service is provided; no alerting, SAR, or Air Traffic Control service is part of the agreement. The rest is detailed in **Clipperton AIC 03/18**.

FSB and the Clipperton Government have also partnered with Thales and the KPA Military Construction Unit in a US\$27 million agreement to build an entirely new Oceanic Control Centre on the Island, to be completed by 2021. “Until then, we will rely on HF and position reporting, but from 2021 we will be able to use space-based ADS-B”, said Mr. Kettu.

Clipperton Oceanic welcomes all. If you’re passing, say hello on HF. And if you’re planning to enter the airspace, make sure to read AIC03/18.

Media contacts:

- **Reinhard Kettu** (FSB) – reinhard.kettu@fsbureau.org
- **Francois Renard** (Clipperton Government) – renard.francois@clipperton-gov.co

Further Reading:

- Clipperton Oceanic – AIC03/18 (Clipperton DCA)
 - Clipperton Department of Civil Aviation website
 - Clipperton Government website
 - Press Release (March 2018)
 - Clipperton Radio – a history (Wikipedia)
-

New rules for charter flights to Greece

David Mumford

9 May, 2018



On Mar 23, the Greek CAA introduced a new rule requiring charter flights on non EU-registered aircraft with up to 19 seats to apply for an annual TCO license before operating to Greece.

This is in addition to having to obtain the standard landing permit, as well as the TCO approval from EASA.

So far, the CAA haven't officially published an English version of the new rule anywhere, although they say that it will be updated in the AIP at some point. But as handling in Greece is mandatory, they decided to distribute the information to all handling agents & aviation service providers in Greece for them to notify their customers directly.

Click **here** for the translated version of that document, with all the info you need to know about how to apply.

It looks like you can't apply for this new TCO license through the CAA directly; you can only do so through your "legal representative in Greece" – which can be your handling agent, allowing at least 5 working days to obtain the license if all submitted paperwork is correct.