# Qatar airspace update – military jets intercepting civil flights

OPSGROUP Team
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> 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;

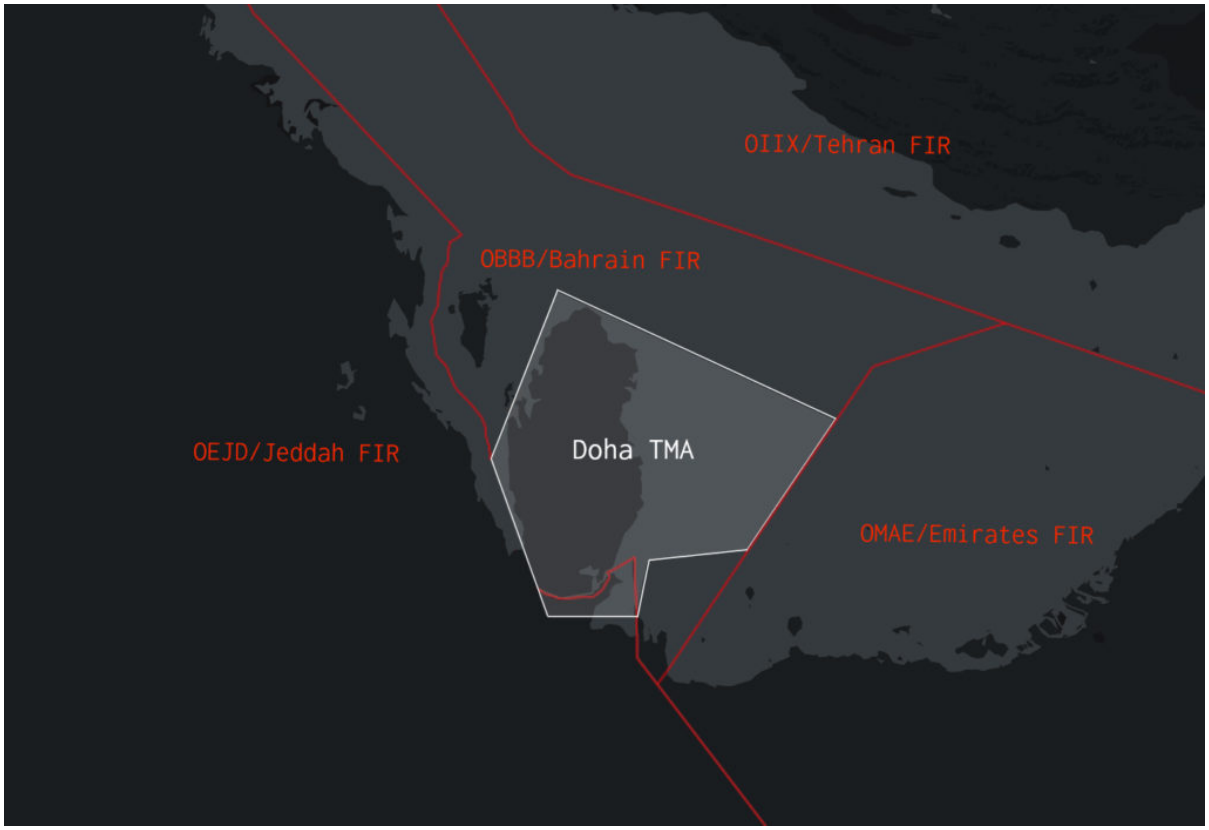
- A **Saudi** newspaper reports of a potential project to attempt to turn Qatar into an island!
- The **UAE** General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) has lodged a complaint with ICAO after an incident last week in which two Qatari jets came “dangerously close” to two civilian aircraft from the UAE. Qatar’s 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.**

| Country | Non-QATAR registered | QATAR registered |
|---|---|---|
| **Egypt (HECC)** | No NOTAM'd restrictions. | No NOTAM'd restrictions.<br><br>(NOTAM A0032/18)<br>Temporary RNAV5 ATS Route T565 established between RASDA-GESAD-RAMKU, FL300-310 for Qatar registered aircraft flights between Beirut and North African Airports. |

| Country | Non-QATAR registered | QATAR registered |
|---|---|---|
| **Bahrain (OBBB)** | (NOTAM A0204/17)<br>No flights allowed between Kingdom of Bahrain and State of Qatar and vice-versa.<br><br>Multiple restrictions for STATE (and Military) aircraft transiting Bahrain airspace to avoid overflying Qatar. Some operations approved over Qatar but prior approval required. See NOTAMs.<br><br>(NOTAM A0219/17)<br>Operators not registered in Kingdom of Bahrain intending to operate non-scheduled flights or charter flights including private flights, cargo and passenger from or to the State of Qatar via Bahrain airspace shall obtain approval from the Bahrain CAA by providing a copy of detailed manifest of the flight including passenger names at least 24 hours prior to departure to:<br><br>Email: schedule@mtt.gov.bh<br>Ph: +97317329035 or +97317329096 | (NOTAM A204/17)<br>No flights allowed between Kingdom of Bahrain and State of Qatar.<br><br>(NOTAM A0219/17) All flights registered in the State of Qatar are not authorized to overfly Bahrain **airspace**.<br><br>***except***<br><br>(NOTAM A0220/17)<br>**All routes** within Bahrain **FIR are available** for Flights affected by NOTAM A0219/17, **except** airways that fall within the Bahrain airspace (over the island of Bahrain). |
| **Saudi Arabia (OEJD)** | (NOTAM A0596/17)<br>All NON-Saudi or NON-Qatari registered aircraft intending to use Saudi Airspace to/from Qatar Airports shall coordinate with General authority of Civil Aviation within one-week to obtain permission.<br><br>Email: special@gaca.gov.sa<br>Ph: +966115253336<br><br>It appears this **does not apply** if you are simply overflying Qatar. | (NOTAM A0592+593/17)<br>All overflights and landing authorizations revoked UFN. |
| **UAE (OMAE)** | (NOTAM A0848/17) Operators not registered in UAE intending to operate non-scheduled flights or charter including private flights, cargo and passenger from or to the state of Qatar **via UAE airspace** shall obtain approval from the GCAA aviation security affairs by providing a detailed manifest of the flight including passengers names at least 24 hours prior to departure to:<br><br>Email: avsec-di@gcaa.gov.ae<br>Ph: +971 50 642 4911<br><br>This seems to **include overflights over UAE** bound to Qatar. | Not authorized to overfly UAE airspace, depart or land at UAE aerodromes.<br><br>There is however a temporary RNAV1 ATS Route T665 from DAPER DCT KUSBA DCT RORON DCT OVONA (FL220-400) open to Qatari registered aircraft for flights inbound to Qatar. (NOTAM A0459/18) |
| **Kuwait (OKAC)** | No NOTAM'd restrictions | No NOTAM'd restrictions |

| Country | Non-QATAR registered | QATAR registered |
|---|---|---|
| **Iran (OIIX)** | No restrictions.<br><br>(NOTAM A0636/18)<br>There is however an AIP SUP that includes a comprehensive "standard and **mandatory** traffic orientation scheme" for flights operating into Bahrain FIR bound for Qatar airports.<br><br>AIP SUP 03/18 | No restrictions however several additional routes have been made available to facilitate movement from Muscat FIR to Qatar. See OOMM & OIIX NOTAMs.<br>Expect level constraints.<br><br>Traffic Orientation Scheme as per AIP SUP 03/18 applies. |
| **Yemen (OYSC)** | No NOTAM'd restrictions.<br><br>See safe airspace map - there is ongoing conflict in the region. FSB Risk Level One - DO NOT FLY. We strongly recommend avoiding this airspace entirely. | Saudi NOTAM A0604/17 purports to be a NOTAM "On behalf of Republic of Yemen/Aden."<br>"All aircraft registered in the State of Qatar not authorized to overfly Republic of Yemen airspace.<br>Although it appears Qatar aircraft are not strictly adhering to this. No such NOTAM issued by OYSC FIR.<br><br>See safe airspace map - there is ongoing conflict in the region. FSB Risk Level One - DO NOT FLY. We strongly recommend avoiding this airspace entirely. |

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*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