

Free Route Airspace in Africa

David Mumford
6 February, 2024

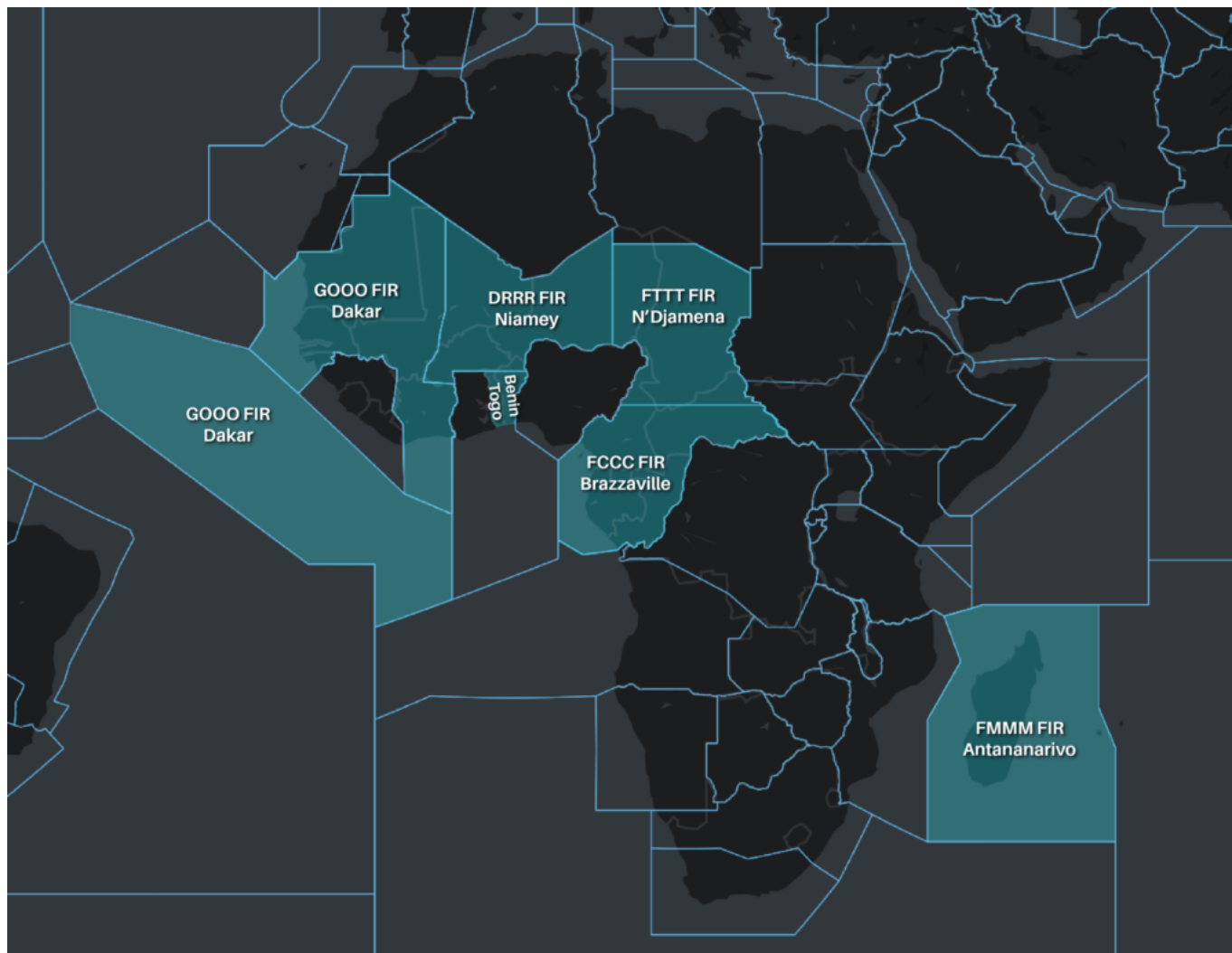


Key Points

- **Free Route Airspace (i.e. you can fly direct between waypoints) is now available across most parts of ASECNA airspace in Africa, FL250 and above, as of 25 Jan 2024.**
- **There are a few other places in Africa where FRA is available too.**
- **There doesn't seem to be a map of where all the FRA regions in Africa are, so we made one (check the map right at the bottom of this article!)**

Where is ASECNA airspace?

Here:



Which parts have Free Route Airspace here?

These UTAs: Nouakchott, Bamako, Ouagadougou, Abidjan, Lome, Niamey, Douala, Libreville, and Brazzaville.

These FIRs: G000/Dakar, FTTT/Ndjamena, and FMMM/Antananarivo.

Flights can plan direct between the **reporting points of the boundary of the respective UTA or FIR.**

Unfortunately, there **doesn't seem to be one nice big map** showing exactly where these all are.

We grabbed the waypoints from the ASECNA AIP ENR Section 3. We tried plotting all these on one map, but it quickly became very messy. So here's a turgid list of waypoints for you (sorry!) just in case you want them:

Ouagadougou UTA: OPUGO TAREN DEKAS OXIDU UMOVO NAVON TUMUT NANGA BIGOM TUXID ANIXA EBSUD EDGIB ONUSI TAVOT NUSUR.

Douala UTA: OBUDU TAKUM PONDO KEMOX ARKEV DESAM TAPEK VOLMU ARASI BTA IPOVO GEBRO ARDEX RALIN ILBAS IKROP.

Brazzaville UTA: PONDO GADUV INIGO ASSAM TJN NAMOR NARTU UMOSA EDGUM RULDO NASED MISRU ONUDA KITEK ASKON AMPER BOSKI POGBA MERON OPDAK GOPUR MPK PIPLO AGTOM EMSAT BAMAV AMSIK BZ PIRMI LIKAD ARAKI TIMAK NERUP SEMUL ARKOS GARLA ONLEN EDOTO PILVI TAPIL MOVOD NEBEX MISTI ONKAR TAPEK DESAM ARKEV KEMOX.

Abidjan UTA: BIGOM AMSAT TUSEK ONESI SESIG EGADU ARABA GANKA INAKA RASAD EMTAL URAPI ATANI ARLEM IPEKA DEVLİ MEGOT UBUTU AMPAS ERMIT GUREL TUXID.

Libreville UTA: BIPIV GEBRO IPOVO BTA ARASI VOLMU ONKAR MISTI NEBEX MOVOD TAPIL PILVI EDOTO ONLEN VORET ILDAN NURIP AGSIM AGRUB GULEP BOVGA.

Bamako UTA: GUREL VOLNA MOPAL UBATI NEGLO GATAX IPUGA MESER KIMGA ILDES EREMO ONTOL ONIMI ONUSI EDGIB EBSUD ANIXA INPOS.

Nouakchott UTA: NEVDI DEMIL POVİN MOKOD TIPAD ILDES EREMO ONTOL ONIMI POTOL ODATA SBİTA BRENA BULIS ECHED MIYEC.

Niamey UTA: TERAS ZAWAT İNAMA EREBO ERKEL TOBUK İKTAV RAKOM NAMIS İNİSA İPANO SABSI RİPOL KORUT RISUB DETAR MOLIT USNAV POMPA NANOS UBEVA DOĞON GULEN BOVDA LITAK SİRTO TATAT BATIA GAPAG ENOXO BULSA TAREN OPUGO GALIV NUSUR TAVOT MTI ONIMI ODATA POTOL USRUT IPOBA MOKAT.

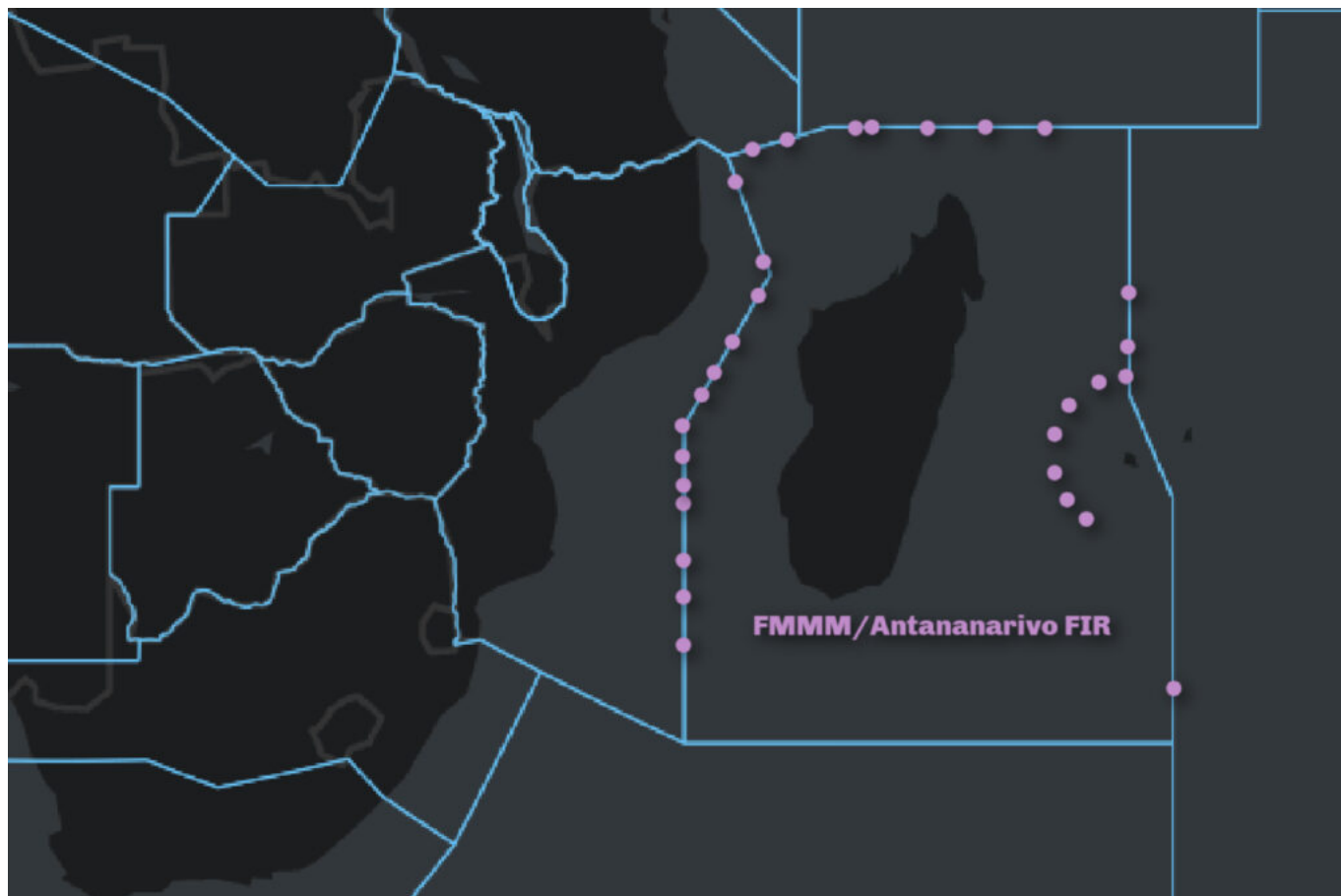
Lome UTA: GAPAG BATIA TATAT SİRTO LITAK NASTO GANDA TENTU SEVAX OPALA TEMSA POLTO KİPSA EPİTİ GASLO KETAT NEPRO USTIX PAMPA BUDNO İPORİ ARLEX TAMIL ENOXO.

FTTT/Ndjamena FIR: İPONO LİGAT TONBA GARIN DEKTU RAKOM NAMIS İNİSA İPANO SABSI RİPOL ENBUT RAVOT ONTOP SİGAL KELAK MOMİG ONSEV EBİMU ETRIS GATAG İNİGO ASSAM TJN NAMOR NARTU UMOSA EDGUM RULDO NASED MISRU ONUDA KAFIA MONAN KİSAL KURAM İLBİB GENEİ.

GOOO/Dakar FIR: SEPOM LUMPO MOGSA AKDAK BADIA İPUGA NEVDİ BİKİS.

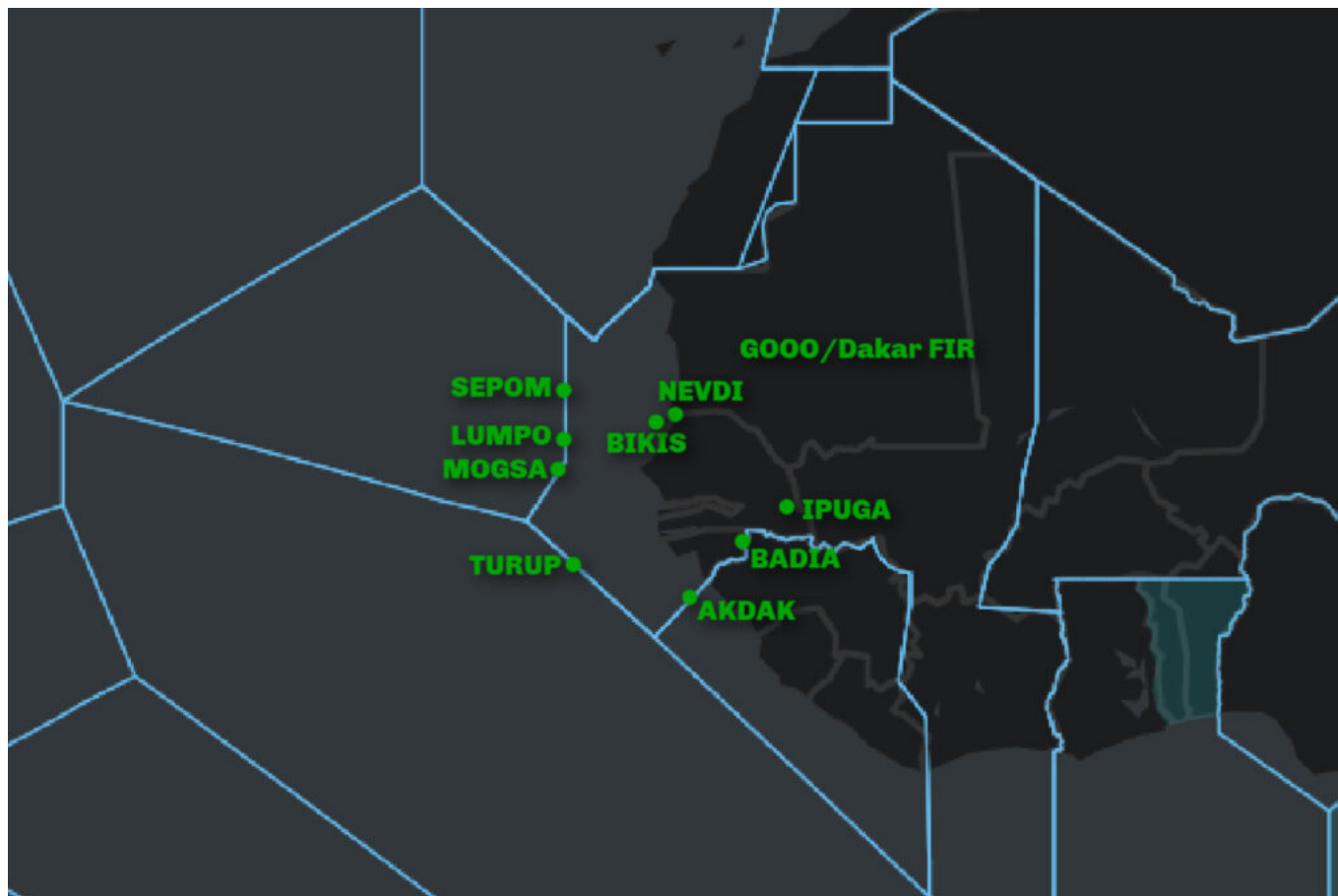
FMMM/Antananarivo FIR: ETGÜN TETRO SUNİR EROPA EGMAD NERUL İXEMA İMKİB ETLEG GADNO ETLOP ENDEL SOLAL KİNAN TABNO BERİL ATOLA NESAM DENLİ ANKOR MİROV RUPİG AMBOD İBMAT APKOT APLEM UVENA DOBUT EGLİP UNKİK GERAG GETİR.

We did make a little map of the **FMMM/Antananarivo (Madagascar)** ones, cos they're kinda funky:



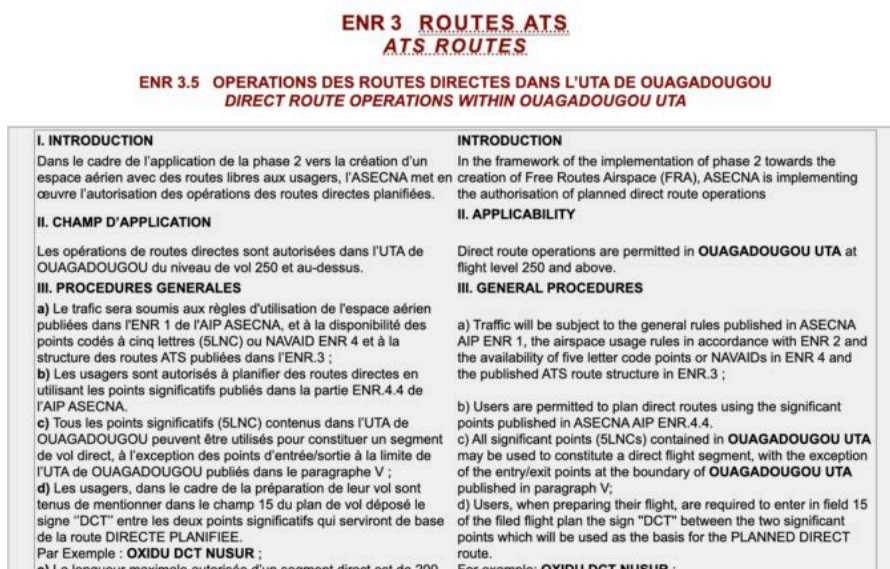
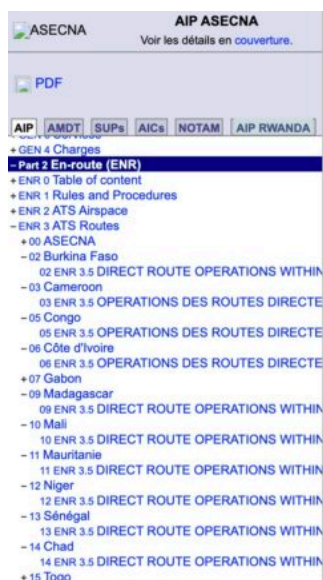
That weird little curve is the CTA boundary for FMEE/Reunion airport - no FRAing allowed there!

And we made this little map of the **G000/Dakar (Senegal)** ones too, just because the airspace covers a massive area (and there's also the Dakar Oceanic FIR too) but **you can only plan direct within a very small area:**



In the G000/Dakar FIR, you can only fly direct via these green points.

For more info, check the full details in the ASECNA AIP ENR 3.5 sections.



Where else in Africa has Free Route Airspace?

Good question! We think it's just these places:

Morocco: FL195-FL460 in the Agadir CTA (currently only available between 2200-0600z)

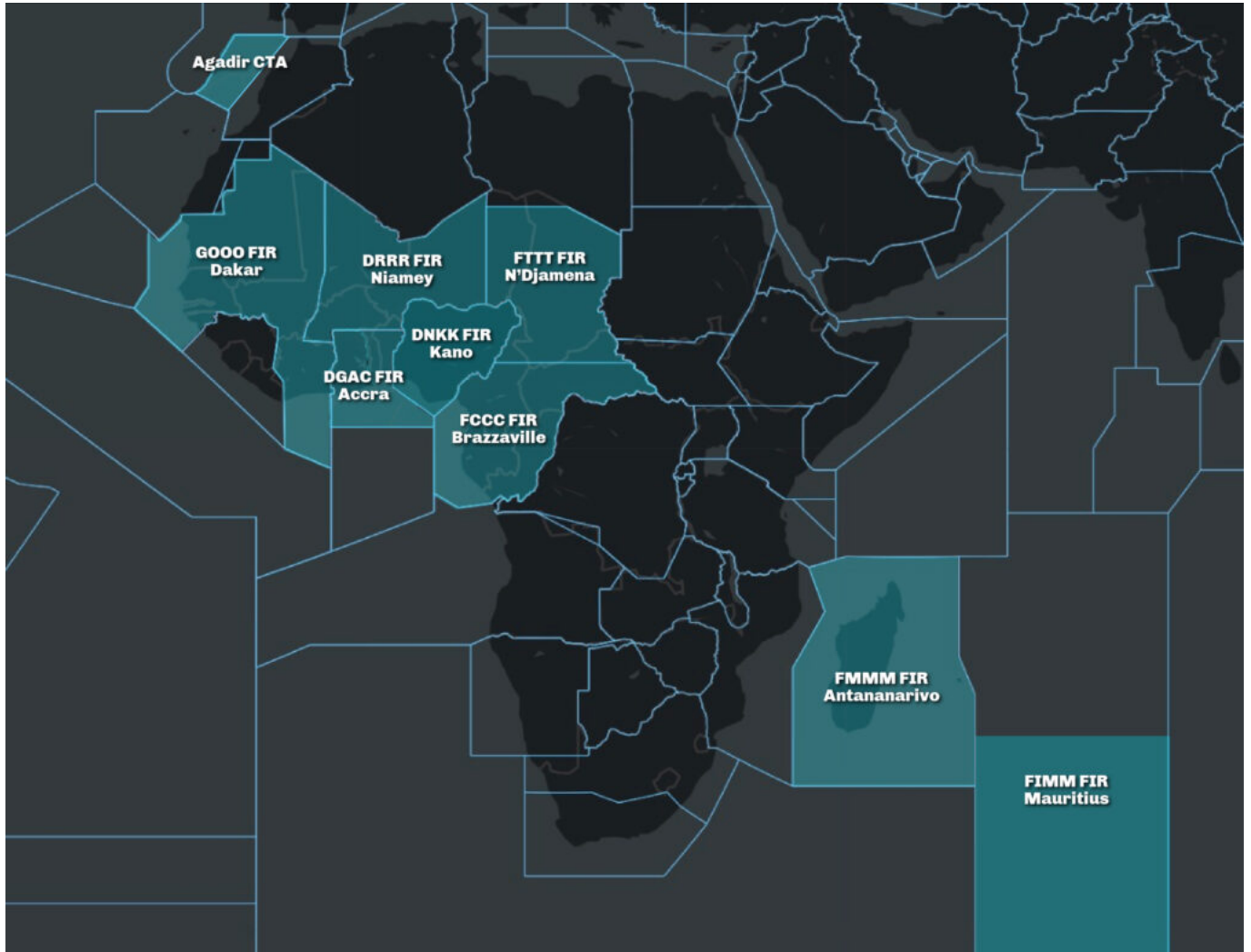
Ghana: FL290-FL460 in the DGAC/Accra FIR between latitudes 2N and 11N.

Nigeria: FL245 and above in the DNKK/Kano FIR.

Mauritius: FL245-FL460 in the southern part of the FIMM/Mauritius FIR South of 25S.

So, putting that all together on one map (which is the thing we really wanted in the first place)...

Here are all the places in Africa which now have Free Route Airspace!

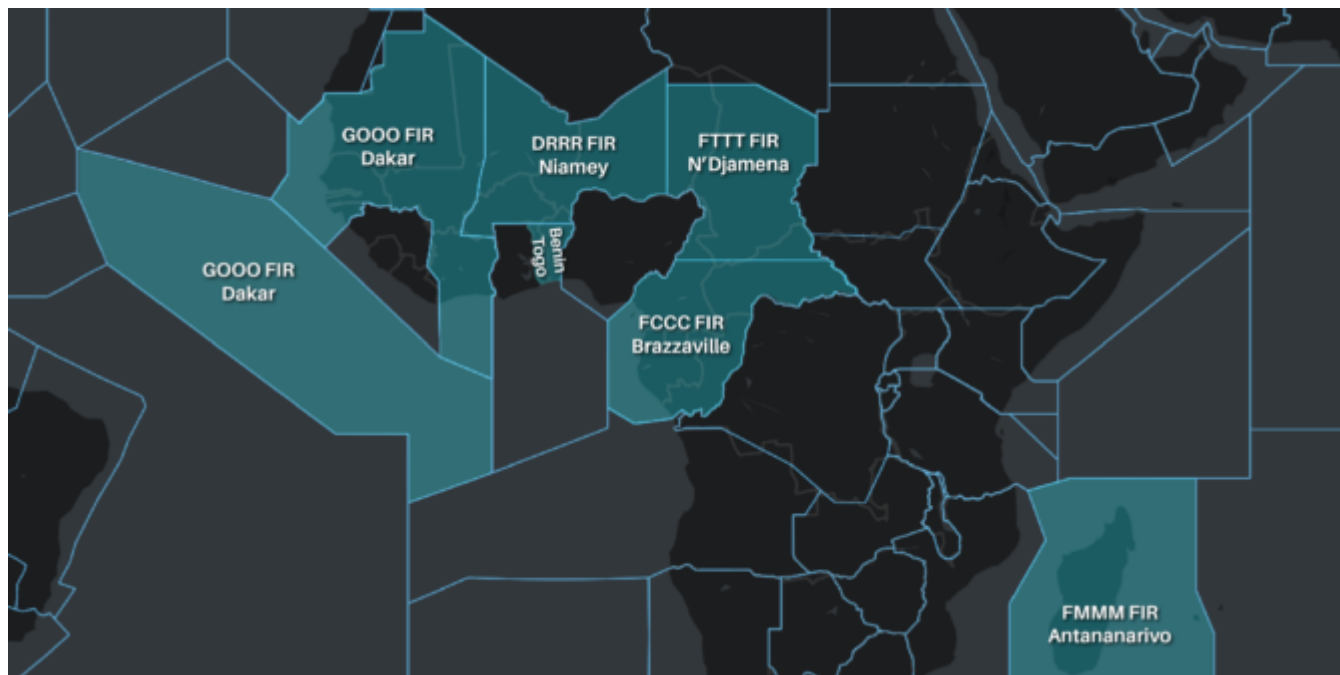


Phew, we made it there in the end.

If you know of any more places which should be added to this map (FIRs, UTAs, CTAs, etc), let us know: news@ops.group

Africa ATC Strike

OPSGROUP Team
6 February, 2024



Update 01NOV

The threat of further ATC strikes in West Africa and Madagascar hasn't completely gone away. The air traffic controllers union USYCAA have published an update claiming that ASECNA (the ATC agency) haven't been sticking to the terms of an agreement reached on Oct 17 – they have been forcibly returning controllers to their countries of origin, cutting salaries, and freezing leave. There's another meeting planned for Nov 7, so we should know more then.

You can read the original announcement (in French) [here](#), or this translated copy.

Update 19OCT

USYCAA has **cancelled any further strike action**, following a meeting with ASECNA on Oct 17.

It looks like ASECNA have agreed to some demands (suspend pay cuts, provide indemnity insurance, set up a committee to talk with the union) but some still need to be resolved – mainly to restore all sanctioned controllers to their positions.

You can read the original announcement (in French) [here](#), or this translated copy.

Update 11OCT

USYCAA has **accused ASECNA of intimidating behaviour towards controllers** ahead of a planned meeting on Oct 17 for negotiations to avert any further strike action. They cite “freezing without explanation of annual leave, verbal invectives, the unwritten suspensions of several air traffic controllers” among their claims.

You can read the original announcement (in French) [here](#), or this translated copy.

Update 27SEP

USYCAA has **suspended all strike action** to allow for further negotiation with ASECNA planned for Oct 17.

You can read the original announcement (in French) [here](#), or this translated copy.

ASECNA have also released a statement, which essentially claims there were no safety incidents during the strike, but doesn't really say much more. You can read it from the source [here](#) (in French) or this translated copy.

Update 24SEP

As of 1200Z today, **the ASECNA ATC strike action itself has ended**. Per the controllers union, ops normal now. Arrested controllers have been freed, suspended controllers reinstated. However, caution should still be taken by crews as their grievances remains unresolved – both sides are now entering further negotiations for 10 days.

With so many FIR's, ACC's, and Terminal areas involved, the strike action has caused chaos in parts of African airspace. The heavy handed response by ASECNA, which included arresting striking controllers, has created a very sour atmosphere for ATC. This creates potential for lapses in judgement and safety concerns, even with the strike action over.

The major concern yesterday was the replacement of licensed controllers with military and other non-qualified staff, without any Notam or notification. Coordination between different units was unreliable, and many ATC centres were confused as to what the situation was.

For now, ops normal to some degree again - but all crews should still take great care until things settle down.

You can read the original announcement (in French) [here](#), or this translated copy.

Update 23SEP

A very dangerous situation is developing today in the African ATC strike. Crews and operators should be aware that in a number of FIRs/ACCs/Towers, the normal controllers have been replaced earlier today with unqualified and unrated people. In simple terms, the voice on the radio is NOT an Air Traffic Controller.

From local sources we understand that **G000/Dakar Oceanic** and domestic, **DXXX/Lomé**, and **FKKD/Douala** all have unlicensed staff that have taken over the facilities.

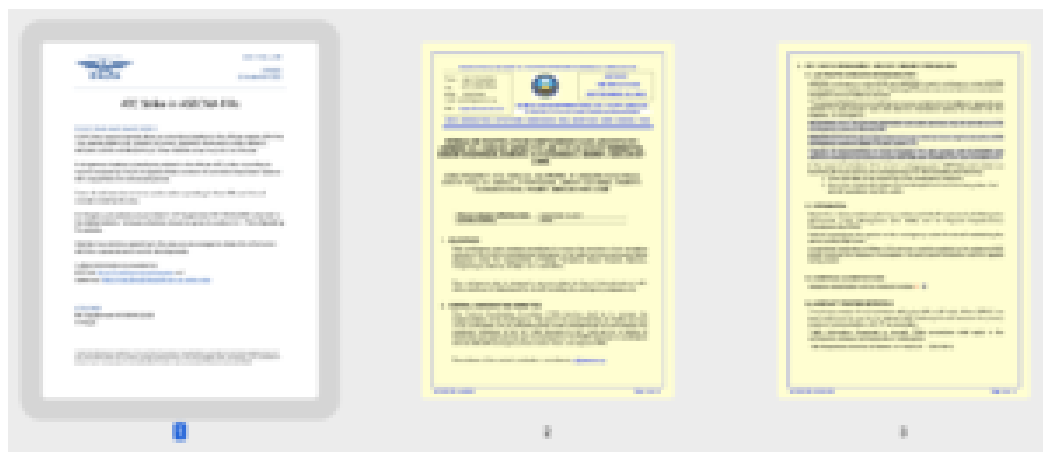
In **FCBB/Brazzaville** and **FMCH/Comoros**, controllers have been arrested. In Niger and Madagascar, controllers have been suspended.

The situation is chaotic in many places and still developing. As of now, **OPSGROUP recommends avoiding ALL ASECNA airspace** unless you have certainty that the ATC service is licensed and safe, and until the situation is more clear.

If you do have to operate through these FIR's, be careful and cautious. ASECNA controls these areas: FMMM/Antananarivo, FCCC/Brazzaville, G000/Dakar Oceanic and Terrestrial, DRRR/Niamey, FTTT/N'Djamena, and the airspace of Togo and Benin.

We will update this further as we get more information. We also ask members to share any information they may have - email team@ops.group or WhatsApp the OPSGROUP Team at +1 747 200 1993

IFALPA have just published a bulletin about the situation.



And an update from USYCAA, the ASECNA Controllers union:

Update 22SEP

Note: These updates relate to the situation when the strike was routine - before reports of unlicensed controllers started to emerge. Please use the info as background only.

- The ATC strike in West Africa and Madagascar is now underway, and is scheduled to continue until 0800z on Sep 25.
- The strike is taking place across several African countries covered by ASECNA: the FIRs of FMMM/Antananarivo, FCCC/Brazzaville, GOOO/Dakar Oceanic and Terrestrial, DRRR/Niamey and FTTT/N'Djamena; and the airspace of Togo and Benin.
- For flights in these regions, the Contingency Plans now apply. Check here for those.
- The strike is also affecting flights in neighbouring airspace of GCCC/Canarias and DAAA/Algiers - Eurocontrol have published some rules and restrictions on flight planning there until the strike is over (see below).

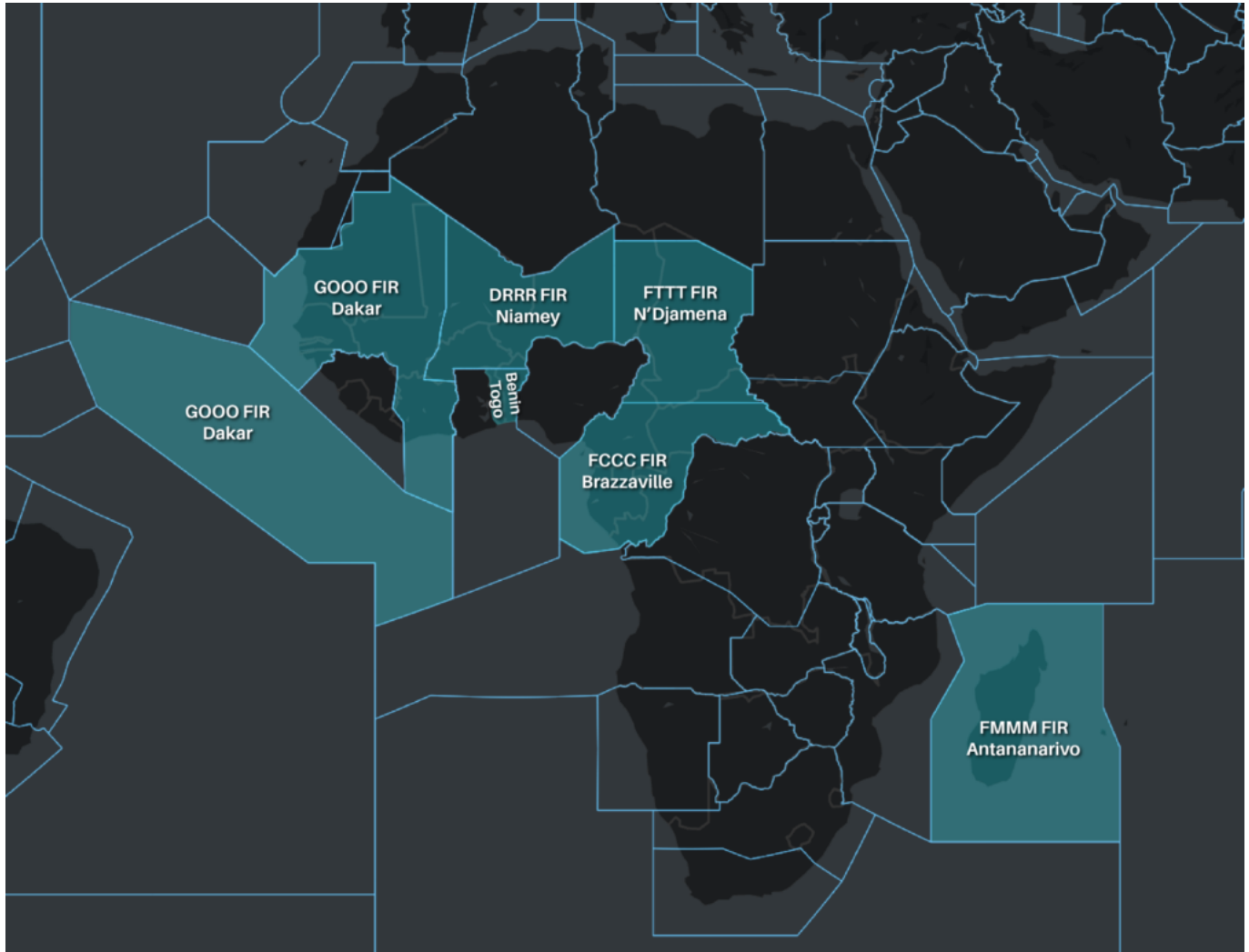
GCCC/Canarias:

- Traffic crossing GCCC and exiting to the south into Cabo Verde will be restricted with low rates to FL340 and 380 on UN741 as well as FL300, 340, 360 and 380 on UN873 (except traffic arriving to GV).
- UN857 will be closed southbound from LZR to GUNET (except traffic arriving to GV).
- Traffic crossing GCCC and arriving to GV must file via EDUMO or IPERA.
- Traffic departing GC via LPPOOCA to GV can not fly via GOBEG, INSAD, IXILU, KUXOV, LAPTU.

DAAA/Algiers:

- Flight plans exiting DAAA airspace southbound not flying the contingency available routes will be invalidated with EU restrictions (i.e. For flights from Europe transiting through Algeria and into GOOO or DRRR airspace where the strike is happening, you have to make sure you flight plan to join where one of the contingency routes starts, otherwise Eurocontrol will reject your flight plan).

Where the ATC strike is happening:



ATC will ensure a minimum service is provided for flights involving:

- heads of state and government
- military
- carrying out medical evacuations
- of a purely humanitarian nature
- participating in search and rescue operations.

The Contingency Plans

ASECNA publish Contingency Plans, with a focus on maintaining overflights for international operations in cases of no, or limited, ATC services. You can find all the Contingency Plans [here](#).

The Contingency plans effectively transfer control to neighbouring ATC controllers. An 'ASECNA wide' strike will therefore **disrupt the level of effectiveness** of these contingency plans.

There does tend to be a prioritisation, or at least measures to help ensure overflights can continue to a certain extent. Parts of African airspace already **operate or have provisions for IFBP**.

Other issues for ASECNA states

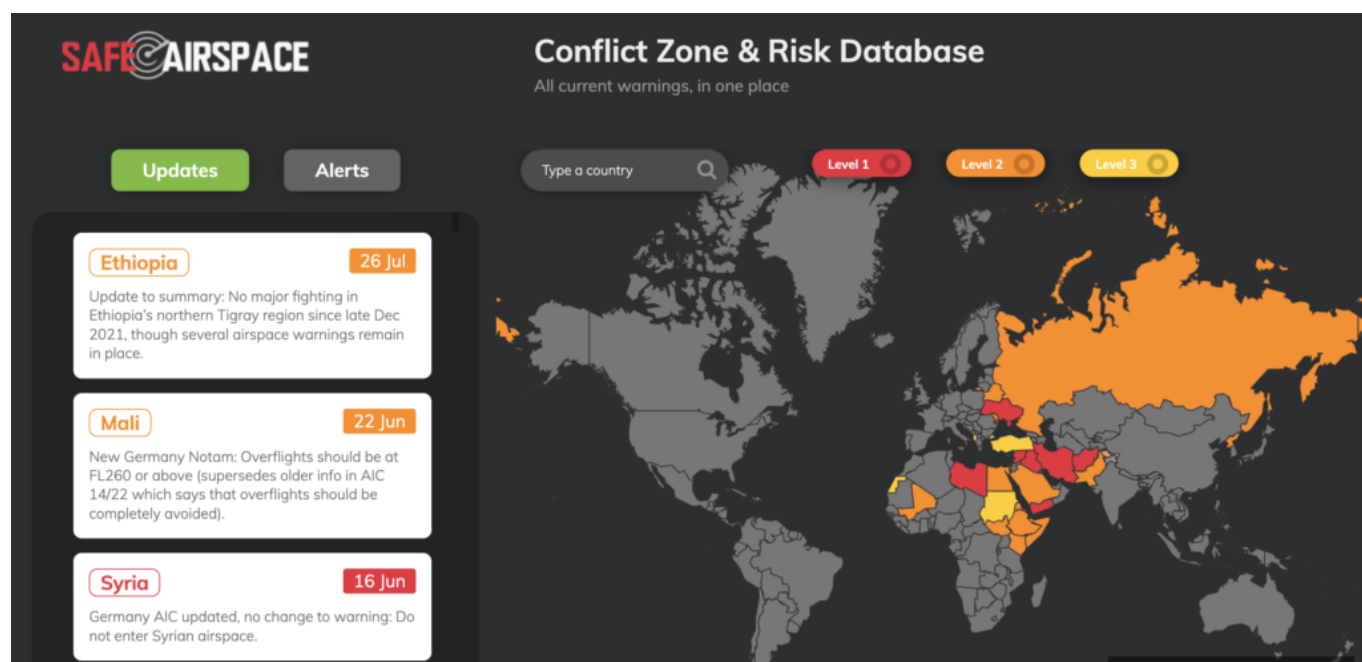
The ASECNA states have faced a fair few disruptions over the past few years.

ECOWAS states closed their land and air borders to **Mali** following a military coup.

Chad (FTTJ/Ndjamena FIR) had some issues back in 2021 during a period of escalating conflict and military control. Initially airspace and airports were closed, before contingency procedures came into force.

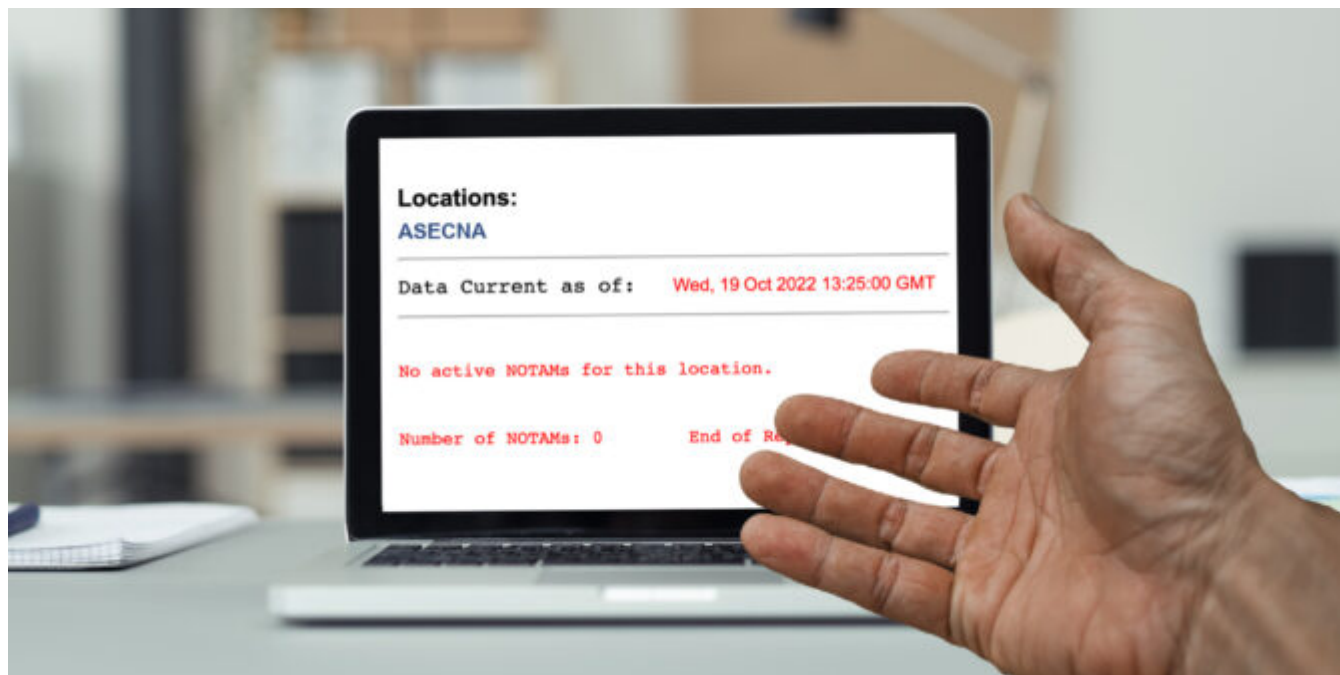
The African region is volatile, with security concerns on the ground in many countries, and some overflight cautions and warnings. **Libya is a 'No Fly' country**. There are warnings in place for **Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, (northern) Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya (bordering other countries), Western Sahara and Mali**.

The limited diversion options across certain parts of the region due to safety and security concerns present planning issues for flights routing over northern and central Africa in particular. You can find more information on this by visiting Safeairspace.



Where have Africa's Notams gone?

OPSGROUP Team
6 February, 2024



ASECNA have a secret treasure trove of AIP SUPs on all kinds of airport closures and other fairly essential info that **doesn't seem to be getting published by Notam.**

Now, it might be because these are relatively *long* things and as you may recall, Notams shouldn't really be **valid for longer than 3 months** because then it is less temporary and more, well, lengthy.

But there are still some in there that we really would expect to see as notams. Such as:

- **FOON/Franceville**, Gabon having potholes in its runway and so not allowing operations on runway 33 from Oct 4 to Dec 31.
- **GOSS/Saint Louis**, Senegal is closed to all traffic for works from Oct 5 to Dec 27.
- **DXXX/Lome**, Togo is having works until Dec 31 so folk should watch out for workers and their machinery during taxi.
- **GOGG/Ziguinchor**, Senegal is closed from Sep 19 to Feb 28 2023 because of security works.

And that's just the obvious ones we spotted - **there are plenty more!** Here's the list of 'latest news' list they publish:

Actualité / Latest news

- [SUP NR 85/A/22FC](#) - October 13, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- [AIC NR 26/A/22FC](#) - October 10, 2022 - ASECNA - Increase of en-route and lighting fees and harmonization of all aeronautical fees rate for ASECNA's community activities.
- [SUP/AIRAC NR 84/A/22FC](#) - October 10, 2022 - FKYS - YAOUNDE NSIMALEN (CAMEROON) - Update of the procedural sections
- [AIC NR 33/A/22GO](#) - October 10, 2022 - ASECNA - Increase of en-route and lighting fees and harmonization of all aeronautical fees rate for ASECNA's community activities.
- [VALID NOTAM - GO](#) - October 15, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [SUP NR 83/A/22FC](#) - October 04, 2022 - FCOD - OLLOMBO Denis SASSOU NGUESSO (CONGO) - Update of aeronautical data
- [SUP NR 82/A/22FC](#) - October 04, 2022 - FOON - FRANCEVILLE M'VENGUE (GABON) - Runway condition
- [VALID NOTAM - FC](#) - October 04, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [AMDT 10/2022](#) - October 05, 2022 - AMDT 10/22 - UPDATING BULLETIN
- [SUP NR 110/A/22GO](#) - October 05, 2022 - GOSS - SAINT LOUIS (SENEGAL) - Airport closure
- [VALID NOTAM - FM](#) - October 01, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [AIC NR 15/A/22FM](#) - September 21, 2022 - FMST - TOLIALY (MADAGASCAR) - Exceptional authorization
- [SUP NR 44/A/22FM](#) - September 20, 2022 - FMML - MADAGASCAR - ATM contingency plan applicable to Antananarivo FIR
- [SUP NR 109/A/22GO](#) - September 20, 2022 - DAKAR TERRESTRE, DAKAR OCEANIQUE, BAMAKO, OUAGADOUGOU, NIAMEY, ABIDJAN AND LOME - ESPACE ASECNA - ATS routes network in ASECNA airspace under ACC
- [SUP NR 108/A/22GO](#) - September 20, 2022 - DXXX - LOME (TOGO) - Approach and runway lighting rehabilitation work
- [SUP NR 107/A/22GO](#) - September 20, 2022 - GOGG - ZIGUINCHOR (SENEGAL) - Closing of airport
- [VALID NOTAM - GO](#) - September 07, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [SUP/AIRAC NR 106/A/22GO](#) - September 07, 2022 - DFFD - OUAGADOUGOU (BURKINA FASO) - Mise en service des procédures de vol liée aux opérations de montées et de descentes continues
- [AMDT 09/2022](#) - September 05, 2022 - AMDT 09/22 - NIL UPDATING BULLETIN
- [SUP NR 105/A/22GO](#) - September 03, 2022 - DAKAR TERRESTRE, DAKAR OCEANIQUE, BAMAKO, OUAGADOUGOU, NIAMEY, ABIDJAN AND LOME - ESPACE ASECNA - ATS routes network in ASECNA airspace under ACC
- [VALID NOTAM - FC](#) - Septembre 01, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [VALID NOTAM - FM](#) - September 01, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [AIC NR 32/A/22GO](#) - August 29, 2022 - DR - NIGER - Revised Health Guidelines for PCR Testing and Vaccination in the Context of COVID-19
- [SUP NR 104/A/22GO](#) - August 29, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- [SUP NR 103/A/22GO](#) - August 25, 2022 - DBBP - PARAKOU (BENIN) - Closure of aerodrome
- [SUP NR 102/A/22GO](#) - August 19, 2022 - GA - MALI - Creation of a temporary prohibited area (TPA) and creation inside of two temporary regulated areas (TRA)
- [SUP NR 13/B/22FM](#) - August 18, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "B"
- [SUP NR 43/A/22FM](#) - August 18, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- [SUP NR 15/B/22FC](#) - August 18, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "B"
- [SUP NR 81/A/22FC](#) - August 18, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- [SUP NR 101/A/22GO](#) - August 17, 2022 - GOGS - CAP SKIRRING (SENEGAL) - Update of aeronautical data
- [SUP NR 100/A/22GO](#) - August 16, 2022 - GOGS - CAP SKIRRING (SENEGAL) - Update of aeronautical data
- [SUP NR 99/A/22GO](#) - August 16, 2022 - GOGS - CAP SKIRRING (SENEGAL) - Update of aeronautical data
- [SUP NR 98/A/22GO](#) - August 15, 2022 - GAGO - GAO/KOROGOUSSOU (MALI) - Activation of TMA and CTR
- [VALID NOTAM - GO](#) - August 13, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- [SUP NR 97/A/22GO](#) - August 13, 2022 - DXGN - NIAMTOUGOU (TOGO) - Glide path unserviceable
- [SUP NR 96/A/22GO](#) - August 13, 2022 - DXGN - NIAMTOUGOU (TOGO) - Localizer resumed normal operation service
- [SUP/AIRAC NR 80/A/22FC](#) - Août 11, 2022 - FKFD - DOUALA (CAMEROON) - TAREK - 5LNC name change
- [SUP NR 14/B/22FC](#) - August 11, 2022 - FGMY - MONGOMEYEN (EQUATORIAL GUINEA) - Unavailability of Navigation Aids
- [SUP/AIRAC NR 42/A/22FM](#) - August 11, 2022 - FMMT - TOAMASINA/AMBALAMANASY (MADAGASCAR) - Change of the NDB «MV» frequency

So the point really is, check this page if you are planning *Togo* into or over ASECNA countries because things that could impact your operation do not seem to be Notam-ed, and they could have a significant impact, particularly with regards **alternate and en-route aerodromes**.

And if you've *Benin* an ASECNA country or airspace and have experienced issues (with un-Notamed stuff or anything else) then **please drop us an email with the details** on news@ops.group so we can share the info around to other folk.

(Sorry for the puns. It's been nice Chad-ing).

ASECNA are raising their fees.

Specifically, their en-route fees another airport lighting fees.

AIC 33/A/22GO was issued Oct 10 and is effective from January 1 2023. 26/A/22FC came out at the same time (and says the same thing).

- **En-route fees will increase by 5%**
- **Runway lighting fees will increase by 3%**

So, if you are an international flight this means the following:

- If you weight **less than 4 tonnes** you won't get charged.
- If you weigh **between 4 and 14 tonnes** you will be charged **220.76 Euro**

- If you weigh **more than 14 tonnes** then you will be charged **110.38 Euro**

But then there is the co-efficient bit, and then there are these two tables as well...

POIDS (en Tonnes) Weight (in tons)	TARIF NATIONAL (en €) National Rate (in €)	TARIF INTERNATIONAL (en €) International Rate (in €)
1 to 14 T	0,29	1,53
15 to 25 T	1,14	1,53
26 to 75 T	2,30	3,07
76 to 150 T	2,91	4,30
More than 150 T	2,75	4,03

POIDS (en Tonnes) Weight (in tons)	TARIF (en €) Rate (in €)
Less than or equal to 75 T	131,50
More than 75 T	166,57

Again, here is the ASECNA AIC/AIP page so you can find any others to check them as well.

Wait... what is ASECNA?

ASECNA is the Agency for Security of Air Navigation in Africa and Madagascar. They look after Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Madagascar.

Which in terms of FIRs, means the **FMMM/Antananarivo, FCCC/Brazzaville, DRRR/Niamey, FTTT/N'Djamena and GOOO/Dakar oceanic and terrestrial.**

That all looks a little like this:

What else has been happening here recently?

Well, if you missed it, then a big ATC strike in October 2022 caused some trouble because they started using **non-trained personnel to fill the ATC seats** - a very risky practice which we obviously don't like.

It hasn't been all bad news with them though. In June 2022 they also started implementing Free Route Airspace, and they have a pretty **decent ADS-B service** set up across the region.

Then there has been the fuel shortage woes. This isn't necessarily within ASECNA airspace, but impacts the entire region so worth a mention.

What about airspace safety?

Chad (the FTTT/N'Djamena FIR and FTTJ/N'Djamena international) saw land and air borders closures in 2021 following the death of their President and effectively a military rule brought in.

Mali had a military coup and reneged on agreements to hold elections, leading to sanctions from the rest of ECOWAS (their neighbours) which resulted in closures of land and air borders.

Flown in to any of these countries recently? Send us your report!

Please send us your Airport Spy reports so we can share the gotchas, the things to know, contacts to contact and anything else useful.

What's Airport Spy? Well, you write a quick little postcard with “what happened” when you went to some airport somewhere. Then you, and others (that's the magic), can refer to your notes for future flights to the same place. Try it here if you haven't already.



Got some intel?

Are you an Airport Spy?

You go to unusual places and see curious things. Your turboprop friends envy you. Now, it's time to give back.

For your next trip, pack a notebook, and file your Spy Report below. You'll get a weekly ops briefing in return.

[File your report](#) >