

Armenia-Azerbaijan Airspace Update

David Mumford
20 September, 2023



Key Points

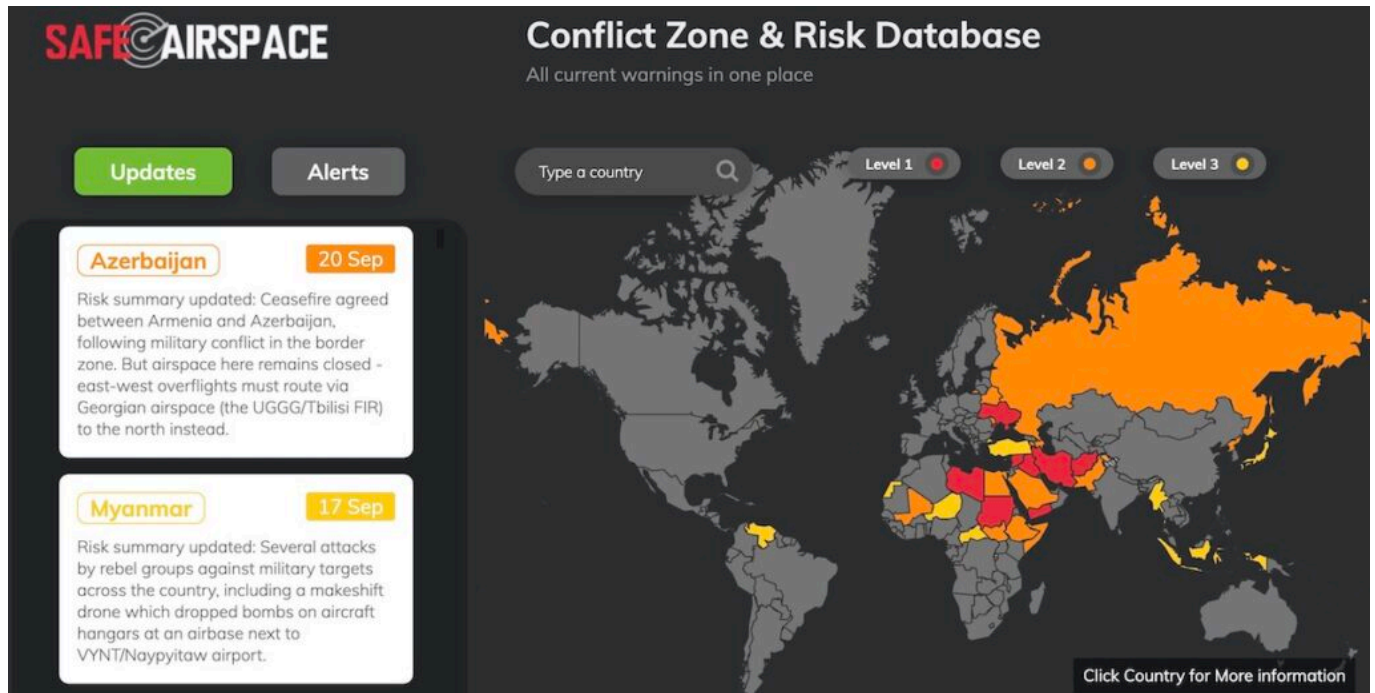
- **Renewed conflict** between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Sep 19, with military operations and exchange of fire in the Nagorno-Karabakh border region. **Ceasefire agreed on Sep 20**, coordinated by Russia.
- Azerbaijan published new Notams saying that cross-border waypoints were closed. These Notams were cancelled on Sep 20, but most operators are still **actively avoiding the region**, and routing north **via Georgian airspace (UGGG/Tbilisi FIR)** instead.
- There have been **no changes to state-issued warnings**.



VETEN, PEMAN, ELSIV and MATAL are closed. Flights must route via ADEKI.

Update: 20 Sep 2023

Azerbaijan has cancelled its Notams which closed its airspace on the border with Armenia. But most operators are still actively avoiding the border region, and routing north via Georgian airspace (UGGG/Tbilisi FIR) instead.



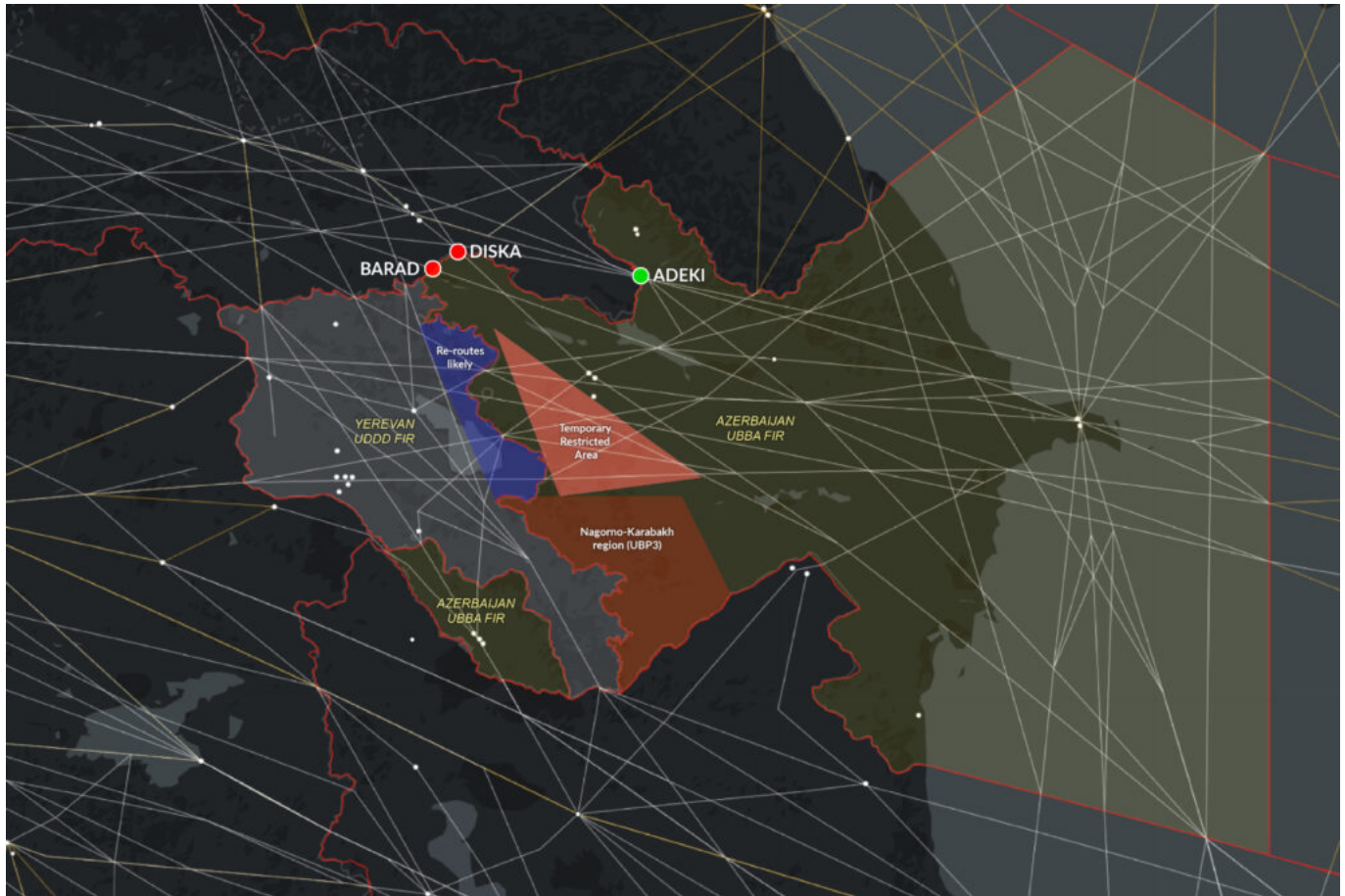
Check Safeairspace.net for a fully summary.

Update: Sep 2022

- In September 2022 there were renewed border clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia – the worst flare-up in hostilities since the war ended in 2020.
- The waypoints along the border between the two countries (VETEN, PEMA, ELSIV, MATA) were temporarily closed on Sep 13, but reopened the next day, after Russia brokered a ceasefire to end the fighting.

Update: Oct 2020

At the peak of the conflict in late October 2020, the airspace picture looked like this:



Here's what happened at that time:

Azerbaijan

- Azerbaijan established a Temporary Restricted Area along the border with Armenia, which meant that all East-West airways between the two countries were effectively closed.
- They also issued a Notam advising caution across the UBBA/Baku FIR due to the spillover of the conflict, with the specific warning of the threat posed by long-range missiles which they claimed Armenia had been using to target locations throughout Azerbaijan.

Armenia

- Armenia never closed any parts of its airspace. Instead, they issued a Notam advising operators to expect tactical rerouting and short notice closures in the airspace along the border, and recommended they carry additional fuel.

Germany

- Germany issued airspace warnings for both Armenia and Azerbaijan. It did not advise that overflights be restricted to a certain altitude, but instead warned of a "potential risk to aviation... from military operation including anti aviation weaponry."

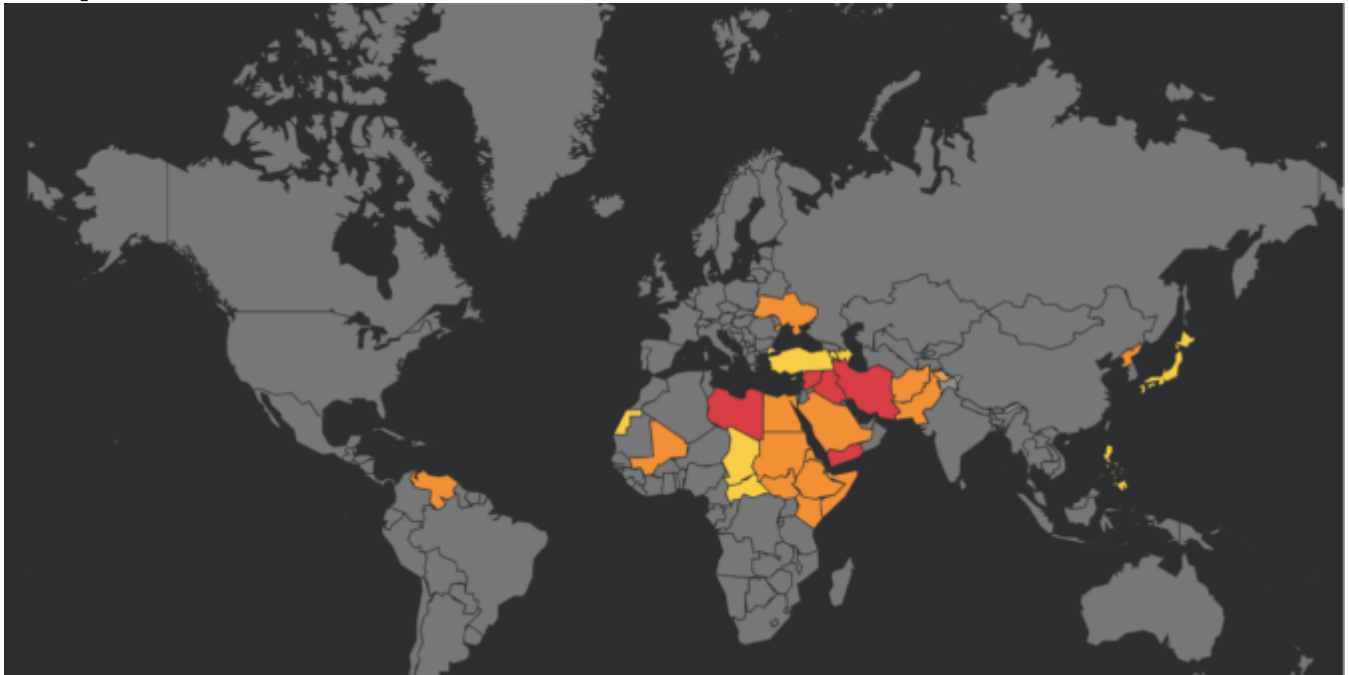
France

- The airspace warnings issued by France were a bit different. Essentially, they said that operators should not overfly the border region except on certain airways in the far north of the UBBA/Baku FIR at FL340 or above.

SafeAirspace: 2021 Update

Chris Shieff

20 September, 2023



2020 was a heck of a ride. But therein lies the risk – **what else might you have missed amongst all the Covid-related noise?** Sadly, conflicts and their risks to civil aviation have not taken a break during the pandemic.

As it's a new year, we thought **a summary of Airspace Risk** was called for. Here's what's making headlines at the moment:

Saudi Arabia & Yemen

Houthi rebels in Yemen are regularly firing **explosive drones and rockets** across the border into Saudi Arabia, and these usually target airports in the south such as **OEAH/Abha** and **OEGN/Jizan**. Their latest attack was on **OYAA/Aden** airport in late December which resulted in mass casualties.

Saudi Arabia continues to retaliate with airstrikes. The latest was in the capital **Sanaa** just weeks ago, where multiple munitions landed near the airport.

The risk to aviation is that **overflying aircraft may get caught in the crossfire** or might be **misidentified by Saudi air defences**. Active terrorist groups in Yemen may also use anti-aircraft weaponry to target foreign interests.

The FAA prohibit all US operators from entering most of the OYSC/Sanaa FIR at any level. Only two airways

are allowed, and they are well off the coast – **UT702** and **M999**.

There are no restrictions on Saudi Arabia but **use caution in the southern regions**. France and Germany have issued their own warnings.

*SafeAirspace **Yemen** page – [click here](#).*

*SafeAirspace **Saudi Arabia** page – [click here](#).*

Iraq

Rocket attacks on military interests at airports have become a common occurrence. They are generally fired by local militia without warning. **ORBI/Baghdad** is frequently targeted, along with other airports including **ORER/Erbil**. There is a clear risk to aircraft at low levels.

US relations were further strained through 2020 with multiple attacks on the US embassy in Baghdad. The tensions escalated to a point where the US considering closing it.

Foreign aircraft continue to be at risk from **armed militia who have access to portable anti-aircraft weaponry**, while **misidentification by the air defence systems** of multiple foreign forces in the country is also possible.

The FAA has extended its ban on US operators entering the Baghdad FIR **at any level**. Even though the SFAR says you can enter above FL320, the long-running Notam KICZ A0036/30 says otherwise.

*SafeAirspace **Iraq** page – [click here](#).*

Syria

There have been several recent **Israeli airstrikes on targets throughout Syria**. In late December there are reports that Israeli fighters transited Lebanese airspace at low level causing alarm in Beirut before attacking targets in Western Syria. Just weeks ago, several sites around Damascus were targeted by Israeli missiles.

The primary risk is that aircraft may be **misidentified by Syrian air defence systems** which are regularly activated. Civil operators may get **caught in the crossfire** as missiles may erroneously lock on to the wrong aircraft.

The FAA are taking no chances – the ban on US operators entering the OSTT/Damascus FIR at any level has been extended a full three years to 2023.

*SafeAirspace **Syria** page – [click here](#).*

South Sudan

Just this week ICAO issued a concerning warning about the risk to aircraft operating below FL245 in the **HSSX/Khartoum FIR over South Sudan**, or flying in and out of **HSSJ/Juba**. They are ‘gravely’ concerned about ATC disruptions, a lack of contingencies, inadequate training of controllers, limited info about equipment outages and a lack of co-ordination with other ATS units.

*SafeAirspace **South Sudan** page – [click here](#).*

Emerging Conflict Zones

2020 saw **three new conflict zones** emerge, here is what is happening with them now.

Ethiopia

A civil conflict erupted in October last year in the **Tigray region of Northern Ethiopia**. The government went to war with the TPLF – a regional force seeking independence.

The region's airports were closed and TPLF showed an intent to internationalise the conflict by attacking aviation interests. They fired rockets into Eritrea targeting **HHAS/Asmara**, and also attacked multiple airports to the South of the Tigray region.

Two airways were closed (T124, and M308) with **no explanation of the risk**. Other airways remained open but uncomfortably close to the fight – especially UG300, UN321 and UL432. **No airspace warnings** were issued despite the dangers.

What's the latest?

In late November Ethiopian forces captured the region's capital **Mekelle** and regained control. Remaining TPLF forces have retreated leaving behind a humanitarian disaster and a vow to continue the fight. Since then, the **airway closures have been removed** and things have gone quiet, **but an airspace risk remains** – armed militia continue to be active in Northern regions and may be looking to make a statement. **Be wary of operating in the area.**

Western Sahara

Late last year the region's independence movement (the Polisario) declared war on Morocco for breaching a ceasefire agreement. The FAA published a warning that the Polisario **might have access to anti-aircraft weaponry** left over from previous conflicts.

What's the latest?

It is still an **active conflict zone**. The fight has reached the international stage after the US declared their support for Morocco. The Polisario have indicated they are willing to at least talk, but so far have not put down their weapons. So, it is a wait-and-see type deal.

The risk to overflying aircraft remains. The GCCC/Canarias FIR keep extending a Notam advising operators to **not fly below FL200** on the following airways: **UY601, UN728 and UT975**. However, the reason is still missing: because of the **risk of anti-aircraft fire**. The G000/Dakar FIR haven't issued any warnings despite the threat. Take care if operating in the area.

Armenia-Azerbaijan

In September last year, an ethnic conflict erupted over a disputed territory in Western Azerbaijan – **Nagorno-Karabakh**. The fight was between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

As a major air corridor for en-route traffic, there were **significant flight disruptions**. Azerbaijan swiftly closed all but one west/eastbound airway and routed traffic via Georgia. Armenia asked aircraft to take extra fuel and expect re-routes. The conflict was short but intense, with heavy artillery fire from both sides. The conflict eventually spread beyond the contested regions with longer range weapons. The entire border region posed a **risk for civil aircraft**.

What's the latest?

For once the news is good. In November a ceasefire agreement was signed with the help of Russia. Armenia effectively lost and withdrew from the region and **the conflict was officially over**. Armenia removed its airspace warning, while Azerbaijan re-opened the affected airways and a large section of airspace near the border.

With the conflict now over, and no new reports of significant fighting since the peace agreement in November, direct crossing traffic between the two countries is now technically possible again. However, **most East-West flights are currently still electing to go further north** instead, connecting between Azerbaijan and Georgia's airspace, avoiding Armenia.

What about Safeairspace.net?

Our conflict zone and risk database is **updated constantly**. We assess risk with official sources and build a simple picture for you of those need-to know-places.

There are currently 5 regions which are assessed as a **Level 1 Risk - No Fly**. These are: **Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Libya, and Syria**.

Head over to SafeAirspace.net and take a look. With a single click you can download a **risk briefing** of the entire world in just a few pages of nice simple English.

The mission of SafeAirspace is this: to provide a single, independent, and eternally free resource for all airspace risk warnings, so that airlines and aircraft operators can easily see the current risk picture for unfamiliar airspace. If you know of a risk not listed on the site, or you have anything else to add, please get in touch with us at news@ops.group

Midweek Briefing 22JUN: Iceland ATC strike - end in sight, Israel FPL changes

Cynthia Claros
20 September, 2023

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Iceland ATC strike - end in sight 22JUN Operators on both sides of the Atlantic have been frustrated over the last 6 weeks with continual sporadic ATC Industrial action. And end may be in sight, but in the meantime keep a close eye on BIRK, BIKF and BIRD Notams. Read the article.

FPL changes: Israel 22JUN Current Flight Planning procedures for flights across Europe from Israel will change in light of a new agreement signed between Israel and Eurocontrol. Read the article.

LFZZ/France ATC Strike Number 9 gets underway today until 24JUN at 0400Z, usual disruption and restrictions apply. Avoid France where possible. NOTAM F1171/16 refers.

EGGX/Shanwick is having an 80's party on the 28th of June at 1600Z. For engineering work, all the new technology is being taken offline for three hours, so no CPDLC, ADS-C or OCL. Instead we have Voice Reports, HF, Manual Clearance Requests (123.95 or 127.65), and so on; just like the good old days. When you hit 30W log on to Gander manually.

UMZZ/Belarus The Minsk FIR has updated its table of cruising levels and altitudes below Transition; view the AIC.

Gambia The UK FCO issued updated travel advice for The Gambia : "Demonstrations took place in April and May 2016 in Banjul. Demonstrations could occur at any time in any part of the country prior to presidential elections planned for 01DEC. You should be vigilant, avoid all demonstrations"

LPZZ/Portugal is joining the International ATC Strike Club and will begin with industrial action, for two hours daily on: June 30th, and July 8th,15th, 22nd and 29th.

KCXO/Houston Regional will be opening a new customs facility mid July. KCXO serves the Metro-Houston area and is 46 miles outside of town. The new CBP facility adds more choice to international operators over the already saturated Houston area airports.

KZZZ/United States The U.S. Navy has scrubbed the planned military GPS interference testing across the U.S. Southwest that was supposed to happen this month.

LWSS/Skopje is implementing Free Route Airspace in the Skopje ACC above FL245, effective 23JUN. FRA is available H24 with DCT limit unlimited. The ATS network above FL245 is withdrawn. Additional info is available in the Republic of Macedonia AIP AMD 58/16. New RAD measures can be found in the increment file and will become part of Annex 4 on AIRAC 1608.

LWZZ/Macedonia Late on 20JUN, tens of thousands of anti-government protesters gathered in central Skopje, Macedonia's capital, to conduct another demonstration. The protesters gathered outside the Special Prosecution building before then marching to the Ministry of Justice building, where they broke some of its windows and threw red paint at its exterior.

EZZZ/Scandinavia Another Free Route Airspace update is happening in the two Functional Airspace Blocks NEFAB and DK/SE FAB. NEFRA Phase 1 will be implemented as of AIRAC 1607 on 23JUN, to implement H24 cross border Free Route Airspace between DK-SE FAB and NEFAB, except Norway, above FL285. ATS routes will be kept. Norway plans to implement cross-border Free Route Airspace spring 2017.

CYZZ/Canada has introduced "No Drone Zones" around airports that includes fines for offenders caught operating drones in the restricted areas. They are also drafting new legislation to strengthen rules regarding drone operations.

LEMD/Madrid may have industrial action on 28JUN, the Apron controllers are making noises about a strike. Not confirmed.

WAZZ/Indonesia FIR Ujung Pandang FIR has a couple of radar outages from 19-27JUN. Reroutes or delays are not likely, but strong potential for lower than optimum Flight Levels.

HECC/Cairo FIR If for some reason you are operating flights to or from Libya, then **A:** You're probably not reading this bulletin carefully enough, and **B:** Be aware that you are required to obtain PPR from Egypt via AFTN to HECAYNYX, at least 48 hours before the flight, in order to overfly Cairo FIR.

EGAA/Belfast ILS 25 out of service along with other ongoing runway and taxiway closures until 11AUG16. Please check EGAA NOTAM's for specific closures.

EGLF/Farnborough Temporary restricted airspace will be in effect for the annual Farnborough Airshow 16-17JUL. AIC M 033/2016.

France The French authorities have extended the document checks at their borders, these measures will apply to all airports in France and also to Basel airport. Especially during the period of the European Football Championships, passengers travelling to/ from French airports are asked to ensure they have a valid identity document (passport or identity card) with them whilst travelling. A drivers license is not an acceptable document.

VTBB/Bangkok FIR Monsoon season runs July-September. Big potential for holding and airport closures in the region, taking extra fuel is recommended.

OEZZ/Saudi Arabia FIR is introducing new Navigation Charges on 01JUL. All the maths is here.

LSZA/Lugano will close 10-19OCT due to heavy maintenance work on the main runway. No traffic will be able to operate. The airport operator has said 20OCT should be the reopening day but risk that this may be extended.

WMZZ/Malaysia Following a directive by the Malaysian Immigration Department, all foreign nationals travelling on all domestic flights will be required to produce passports upon passing through Immigration control, effective immediately.

Azerbaijan An online e-visa issuing system, called ASAN Visa, will be established that should streamline the visa application process. Eligible foreign nationals will be able to obtain supporting documents, submit their visa applications and receive an e-visa within three days of submission through the portal. The list of eligible nationals is expected to be available soon on the Foreign Ministry website.

EGPK/Prestwick has ongoing overnight closures due to ATC staffing problems, keep an eye on NOTAMs.

EIDW/Dublin will closed for 15 minutes at 1500Z on 23JUN due to a VIP departure.

NWWW/New Caledonia The South Pacific is not exempt from ATC strikes either; overnight closure of the NWWW airspace means no enroute traffic accepted in the FIR tonight – and sporadically ongoing. Note that the Fire Service also has reduced RFF category at specific times. Check Notams.

SKED/Bogota FIR NOTAM of the month award: Colombia Notam A1947 issued on 17JUN. Be aware of the potential for your Cabin Crew to request a change to the SID from ATC, unbeknownst to you. In full: "CHANGES TO STANDAR (sic) INSTRUMENT DEPARTURE (SID) COULD BE DONE BY RADIOTELEPHONY BETWEEN CABIN CREW AND THE CORRESPONDING ATS DEPARTMENT WHILE COMMUNICATION INTERCHANGE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH AERODROME OPERATIONS REF. AIP ENR 1.10".

We actually have no idea what they mean. Let us know, and keep an eye out for those sneaky flight attendants.

LEPA/Palma has a bunch of outages, and runway and taxiway closures at present that will create restrictions and delays. Take a close look at your arrival and dep times before operating.

Suriname Immunisation checks for Yellow Fever are being carried out throughout June at all border check points, ports and international airports in Suriname; make sure you have a valid yellow fever certificate if

required.

RJZZ/Japan On 22JUN heavy rains caused building damage and fatalities in southwestern Japan. At least six people died, as a result of the rain and mudslides across the island of Kyushu. Emergency personnel evacuated several hundred people due to the threat of further mudslides.

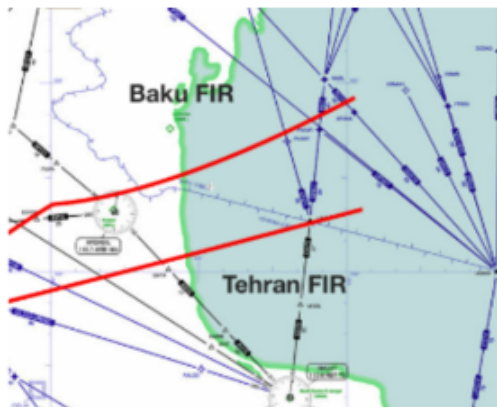
Uzbekistan has increased security due to a major summit, from 23-34JUN which may result in changes to flight departures and lengthy check in and security clearance at airports across the county.

View the full International Bulletin 22JUN2016

Monday Briefing: North Atlantic Changes, Caspian Sea Missiles

Declan Selleck
20 September, 2023

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19OCT2015 Flight operations in the NAT region will see significant changes in around three weeks time, including new 'half-degree' NAT tracks, new Entry Points in Gander and Shanwick OCA's, and several procedural changes. A Special Bulletin with plotting chart, summarising the changes, will be issued by Flight Service Bureau next week.

19OCT2015 Last week 26 cruise missiles were launched across International air routes in Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Iran, with reports suggesting 4 did not travel as intended. The risk to aircraft operators is summarised in our International Ops Notice 10/15, see below for details.

RPHI/Manilla FIR, Philippines Typhoon Koppu has maintained its strength as it continues to move northward with slightly increasing forward speed along the shores of Ilocos Sur, Luzon. Current location

(1200Z Monday) is to the west of RPLI/Laoag Airport. It is forecast to weaken to a Tropical Storm within 24 hours. No reports of airports affected so far.

OMDW/Dubai World hosts Dubai Airshow 08-12NOV. Landing Permit required for all flights, 3 days processing, standard documents and requirements. Slot required for OMDW, window +/- 5mins. Show details at www.dubaiairshow.aero

OPRN/Islamabad, Pakistan closed 1300-1800 daily due runway works 18-28OCT.

SEXX/Ecuador A new DGAC resolution now effective permits non-scheduled aircraft to land without a Landing Permit as long as the aircraft is operating under private ops, will not stay longer than 72 hours in Ecuador, and visits only one location in Ecuador. The official document is here (in Spanish).

VHHH/Hong Kong with effect 25OCT (IATA Winter 2015) will amend slot issuing procedures to give priority to operators with higher capacity aircraft, and where same types conflict for the same slot time, lower noise levels.

LIXX/Italy ATC Strike confirmed for 24OCT (Saturday) 0800-1600, service will be provided to Overflights and Intercontinental flights only.

LTXX/Turkey Traffic operating through the south eastern part of Turkish airspace to/from Tehran and Baghdad FIRs should check Notams for restrictions. Several restrictions up to FL310 due to military operations.

EGXX/Shanwick Large scale Military Exercise 'At Sea Demonstration' ASD15 affecting OEP's ERAKA and GOMUP starts on 19OCT.

LFxx/France Datalink implemented from 22OCT LFRR/Brest and LFBB/Bordeaux ACC from 0900L. Initial phase, no ACL (Clearance via CPDLC), and aircraft must be on Eurocontrol whitelist. Ref France AIC A22/15.

VNXX/Nepal continues to experience shortages of fuel due to a halt in shipments coming from India. Available fuel for domestic airlines is rapidly decreasing, and authorities worry that domestic flights will soon be unavailable. The Nepalese government has requested that international airlines carry return fuel or refuel at airports en route, as Tribhuvan International Airport (VNKT/KTM) has no available fuel.

View the full International Ops Bulletin for 19OCT2015.