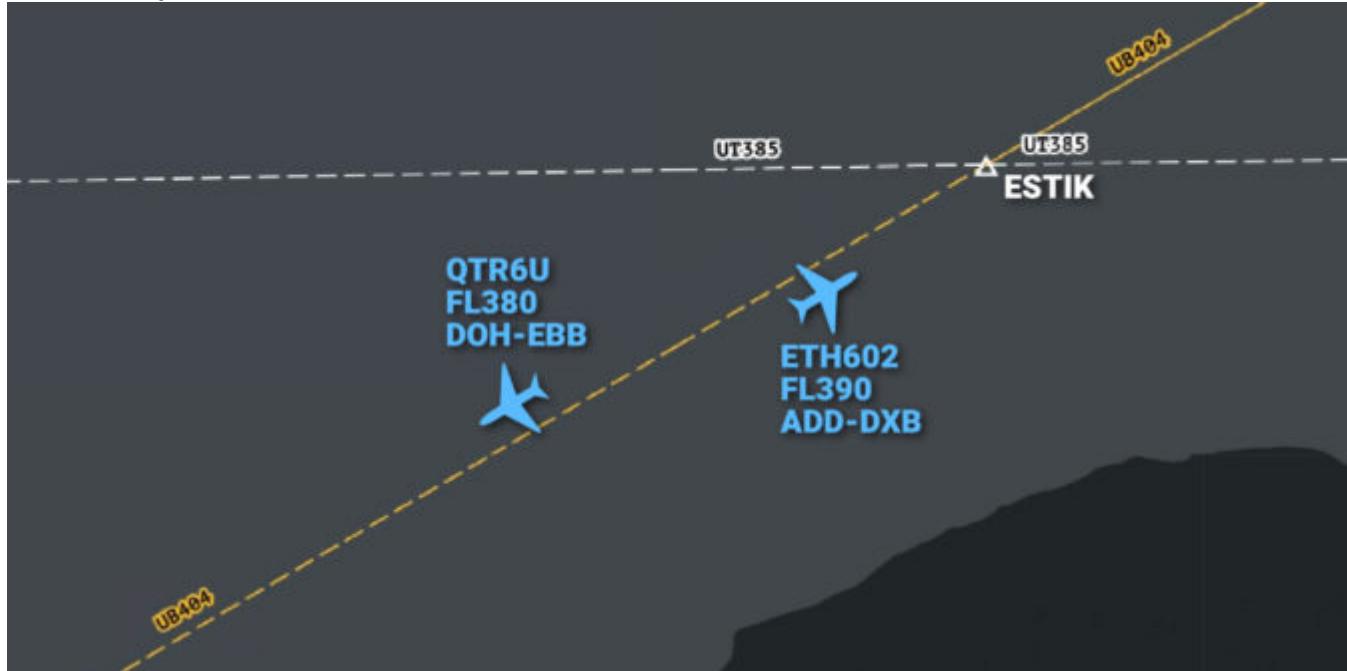


# TCAS Saves the Day in Somalia

David Mumford  
28 February, 2024



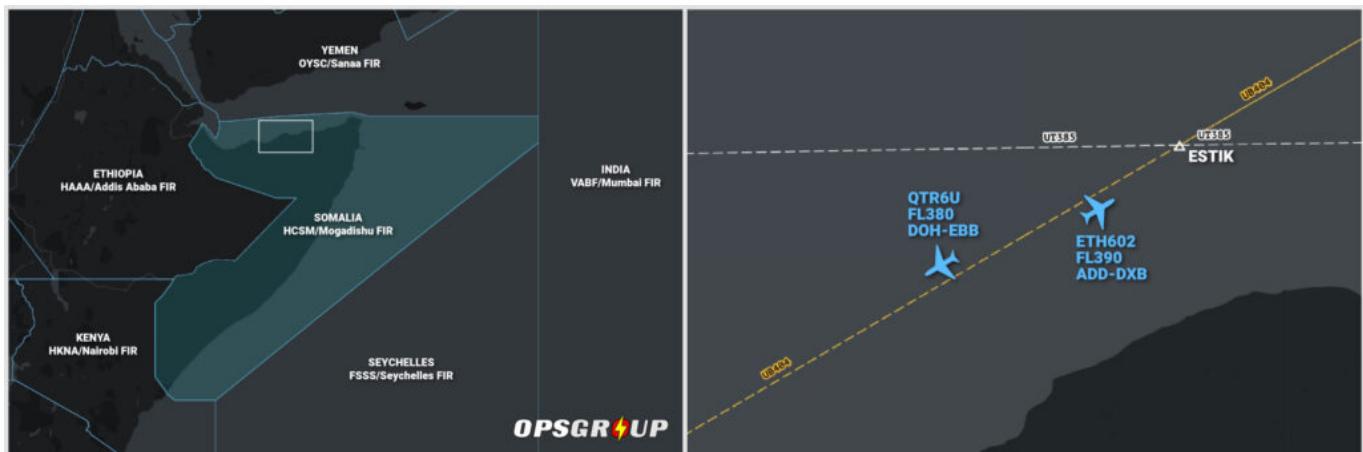
Last week we told you about a new risk emerging over Somalia, where **several enroute aircraft reported being contacted by unauthorized ATC units**. These “fake” controllers have been issuing climb/descent instructions that conflict with the official ones issued by Mogadishu Control.



This week, the very same thing happened to crews of a Qatar Airways 787 and an Ethiopian Airlines A350

**headed towards each other off Somalia's northern coastline.**

The 787 was instructed to climb from FL380 to FL400 whilst the A350 was cruising at FL390 in the opposite direction on the same UB404 airway – near position ESTIK. **A TCAS alert was triggered, and the 787 descended back to FL380 to resolve the conflict.**



From some reports it looks like the two aircraft were **separated by as little as 2.5 nm** when the incident happened, though the situation was helped by the fact that both aircraft were laterally offset from the airway (yay for SLOP!).

### Who should I be talking to?

The two competing ATC centres here are Hargeisa (Somaliland) and Mogadishu (Somalia).

**For aircraft transiting the HCSM/Mogadishu FIR, it's Mogadishu ATC that you should be talking to – not Hargeisa.**

Mogadishu Control holds authority over the entire Mogadishu FIR, responsible for coordinating and providing ATS services in the Upper FIR. **Hargeisa in Somaliland issues secondary transmissions, posing a potential threat to enroute traffic.**

Notably, these transmissions from Hargeisa seem to mimic Mogadishu rather than clearly identifying as “Hargeisa Control” or “Somaliland Control.” Reports suggest that **control instructions from Hargeisa aim to create confusion rather than ensure traffic de-confliction**, possibly as a strategy to draw political attention to their recent dispute with Somalia.

### Advice to operators

Check our previous post for a **full Risk Warning**, including Crew Reports, Maps, Analysis, and Guidance. *And if you can't access, just email the team and we'll send you a copy.*

**The main advice is this:**

- 1. If possible, avoid the Mogadishu FIR.**
- 2. If entering the airspace, expect secondary ATC transmissions from Hargeisa.**
- 3. Limit any contact with Mogadishu to CPDLC only. Only controllers in Mogadishu have access to CPDLC.**
- 4. Do not accept any level changes without ensuring they are genuinely from Mogadishu Control.**
- 5. Avoid requesting any level changes while within the Mogadishu FIR.**
- 6. Listen out on 126.9 (IFBP) and follow the IFBP procedure.**
- 7. Note that related NOTAMs issued by Somalia may not present the full picture, or be updated**

regularly.

19 FEB 24 PAGE 1 SOMALIA ATC CONFLICT OPSGROUP RISK WARNING

**RISK WARNING**  
**SOMALIA ATC CONFLICT**

ISSUED BY OPSGROUP TEAM  
EMAIL: TEAMOPS.GROUP  
WINTSMP: > 1 747 200 1993

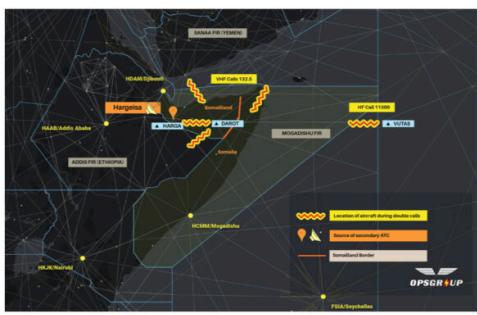
19 FEB 2024 Version 1

**Important Information:** This information covers a developing event: further versions will likely follow. Check Dashboard / Daily Brief for updates. Please report any additional information you have to [team@ops.group](mailto:team@ops.group). Thank you!

TO: ALL OPSGROUP MEMBERS  
ATTN: OPERATING FLIGHT CREW, FLIGHT OPS DEPARTMENTS, SAFETY DEPARTMENTS

**Quick Summary – ATC Conflict in Somalia**

- This affects aircraft transiting the **Mogadishu FIR**.
- Enroute aircraft are being addressed by competing ATC units on the same frequency.
- Numerous aircraft have received climb/descent instructions from **unauthorized ATC units**.
- Location: Primarily within radio range of **Hargeisa** (VHF 132.5), also via HF (11300)



[Download the Risk Warning](#) (PDF, 9 pages, 2Mb)

## Somalia joins the A Team

OPSGROUP Team  
28 February, 2024



**Full ATC service is returning to Somalia!** The HCSM/Mogadishu FIR is currently Class G uncontrolled, which means a lot of fairly annoying IFBP calls to make. This is about to change though...

(Well, not the IFBP thing sadly, they recommend you continue these even during the trial period).

**From May 11 to September 21** they will be running a trial which will see the airspace from **FL245** up become Class A controlled airspace.

The trial will only be between **0300-1800z** (so during the day), but will cover the entire FIR including oceanic areas.

**Notam A0051/22** (A0028/22) advises on this, whilst **AIP SUP 02/22** has all the info (we're still waiting for a copy!)

### **Who to talk to in Class A?**

The following frequencies are your best bet:

- **VHF 132.5 MHz** if within 240NM of position MOGDU.
- **HF (Mogadishu Control)**
  - Day Primary 11300Khz
  - Day Secondary 8879Khz or 13288Khz
  - Night Primary 5517Khz
  - Night Secondary 11300Khz or 3467Khz
- **CPDLC** for those FANS1 equipped, logon address **HCSM**

If you lose comms, then the procedures are pretty standard. These are available in the Somalia SUP 05/2018. Or you have the full contingency plans to follow in SUP 03/22.

### **SATCOM**

Mogadishu have also re-confirmed their dedicated SATCOM numbers. Here they are:

- +252 6133 50047
- +252 6233 50047
- +252 1857 390
- +252 1857 391
- +252 1857 392
- +252 1857 393

### **What's the difference between Class A and Class G?**

In a nutshell, Class A doesn't have VFR traffic in it, and you do need **ATC clearances**. Traffic will be provided with 10mins lateral/longitudinal separation and **2000' vertical separation** at and above FL410, 1000' at and below FL400

**Class G is uncontrolled** which means it is all procedural, deconfliction services and traffic advisory services only.

## What's (less) new in Mogadishu.

- Somalia still isn't the safest region to fly through. Major authorities **prohibit flights below (generally) FL260**, and recommend sticking to the oceanic routings rather than overflying the land. All the up to date airspace warnings are available on Safeairspace.
- IFALPA also published a bulletin back in 2018 talking about **procedures in the Mogadishu FIR**.
- We shared a bunch of stuff on the **general security threats and risks** in Somalia here. Currently airports in Somalia are basically off limits though due big safety concerns.

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## Cargo plane in Somalia was shot down

David Mumford  
28 February, 2024



***Update: Ethiopia has confirmed that this was a shoot-down event. The Ethiopian Army misidentified the aircraft - or at least its intentions.***

Somalia is investigating how an Embraer EMB-120 aircraft crashed while on approach to Bardale airstrip in Somalia, killing all six people on board. Local officials say the cause of the crash is not yet clear but there has been speculation it **might have been shot down**.

The Kenyan private cargo plane, operated by African Express, was operating a **humanitarian mission with coronavirus medical supplies** when it crashed on Monday afternoon in southern Somalia, about 300km northwest of Somalia's capital Mogadishu.

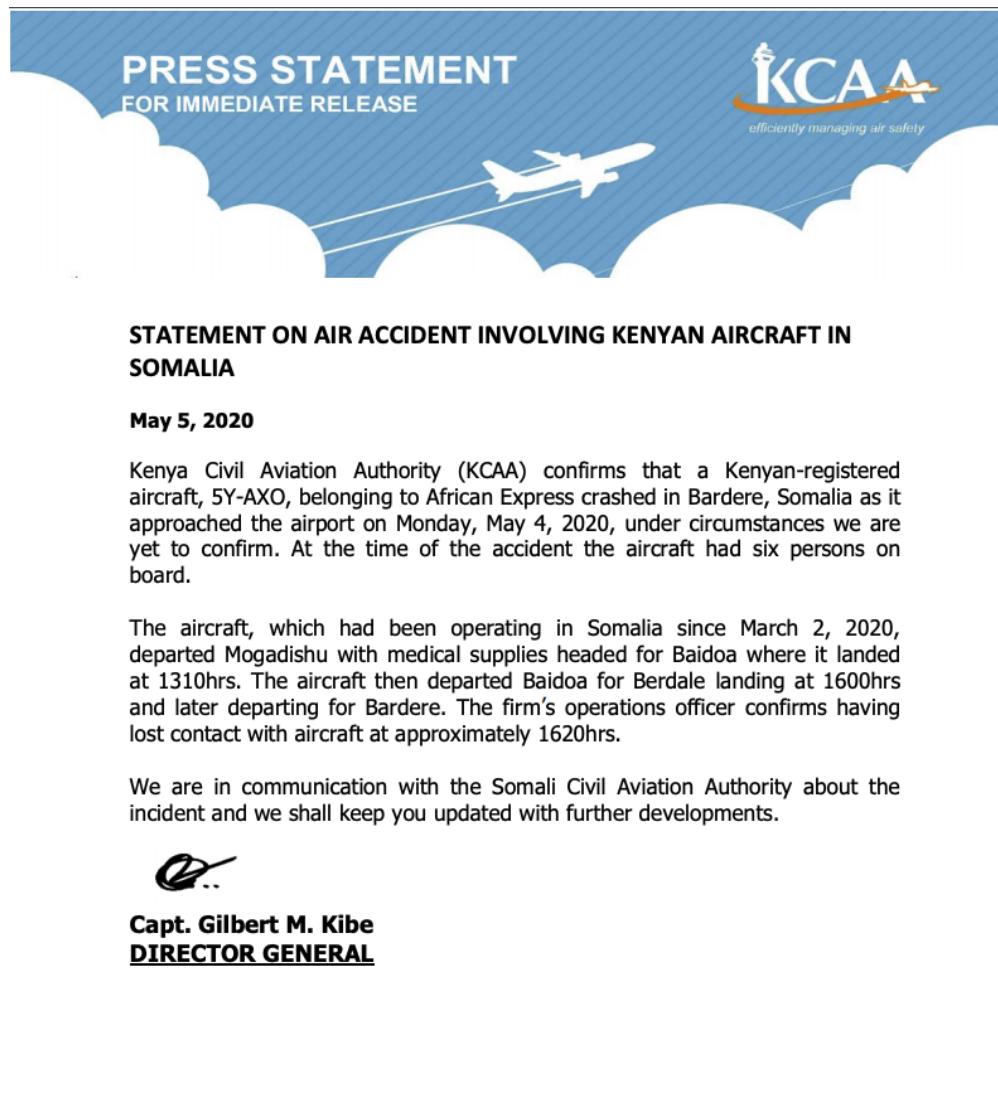
According to local security officials, a rocket-propelled grenade brought down a light Kenyan-registered aircraft with 6 crew while landing in Bardaale town in Bay region #Somalia.

2 Kenyan pilots & 4 #Somali nationals are dead. #Ethiopian forces hit the plane mistakenly.  
pic.twitter.com/zbai0gyMI8

— Abdalle Ahmed Mumin (@Cabdalleaxmed) May 4, 2020

Bardale airstrip is a base for the Ethiopian military under the multinational African Union mission, which is combating the al-Shabab terrorist group in the region.

The Kenyan Civil Aviation Authority on Tuesday said the plane crashed on approach to Bardale “under circumstances we are yet to confirm.” However, the Associated Press are quoting local state officials who have told them that **a projectile fired from the ground hit the plane** as it approached the airstrip.



**PRESS STATEMENT**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KCAA**  
efficiently managing air safety

**STATEMENT ON AIR ACCIDENT INVOLVING KENYAN AIRCRAFT IN SOMALIA**

**May 5, 2020**

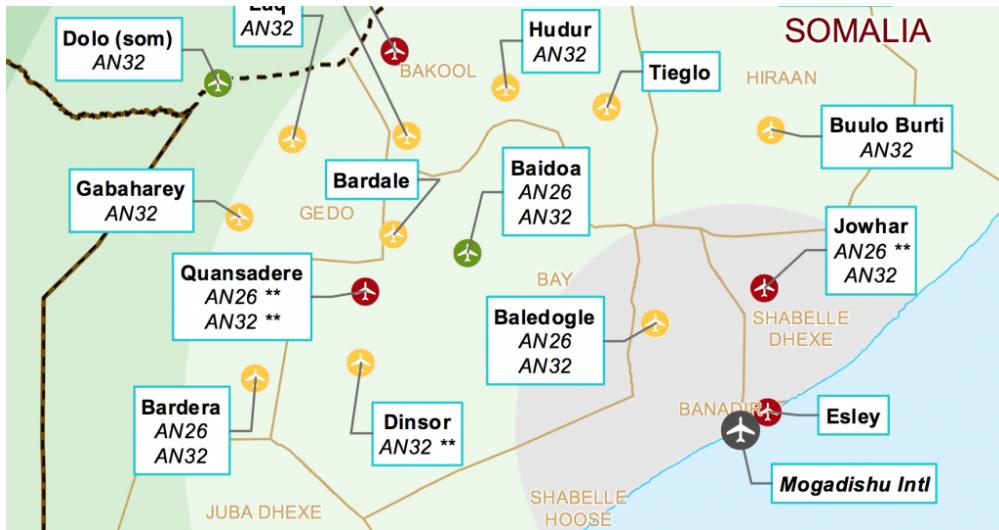
Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) confirms that a Kenyan-registered aircraft, 5Y-AXO, belonging to African Express crashed in Bardere, Somalia as it approached the airport on Monday, May 4, 2020, under circumstances we are yet to confirm. At the time of the accident the aircraft had six persons on board.

The aircraft, which had been operating in Somalia since March 2, 2020, departed Mogadishu with medical supplies headed for Baidoa where it landed at 1310hrs. The aircraft then departed Baidoa for Berdale landing at 1600hrs and later departing for Bardere. The firm's operations officer confirms having lost contact with aircraft at approximately 1620hrs.

We are in communication with the Somali Civil Aviation Authority about the incident and we shall keep you updated with further developments.

  
**Capt. Gilbert M. Kibe**  
**DIRECTOR GENERAL**

If that is the case, and the aircraft was in fact shot down, it's not yet clear whether this was an **intentional attack** carried out by al-Shabab militants, or an **accidental shoot-down** by Ethiopian forces stationed in the region.



The plane had left **HCMM/Mogadishu**, and stopped in **HCMB/Baidoa** before going on toward **Bardale airstrip**. Kenyan authorities said they were in contact with the Somali CAA - who called the crash "a terrible accident" and said the government was investigating.

JAMHUURIYADDA  
FEDERAALKA SOOMAALIYA  
XUKUUMADDA FEDERAALKA  
WASAARADDA GAADIIDKAIYO  
DUULISTA HAWADA



جمهوريّة الصومال  
الحكومة الفيدرالية  
وزارة النقل والطيران المدني

SOMALI FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation  
Office of The Minister

May 4<sup>th</sup> 2020

#### PRESS RELEASE

It is with deep regret that Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation to confirm an Embraer 120 aircraft operated by African Express was involved in an accident in Bardale around 15:30 hrs local time on Monday May 4<sup>th</sup> 2020. The aircraft was operating as a cargo flight from Baidoa to Bardale.

The aircraft involved in the accident, registered as 5Y-AXO, was manufactured by Embraer with serial number 259, from production line on 27 July 1983. It was powered by twin engine / Pratt & Whitney PW118.

The government is conducting thorough investigation and will publish the findings in a timely manner. Our deepest condolences to the families and friends who may have lost loved ones in this terrible accident.

ENDS

Multiple countries have long-standing **airspace safety warnings** in place for Somalia. The advice from all sources is similar - **do not operate below a minimum of FL260** in the airspace of Somalia due to a high risk to overflying aircraft from anti aviation weaponry. The FAA **completely prohibit** US operators from flying below FL260, as per the guidance in the Special Federal Aviation Regulation issued in Dec 2019, which reads as follows:

*"The FAA continues to assess the situation in the territory and airspace of Somalia at altitudes below FL260 as being hazardous for U.S. civil aviation operations due to the poor security environment and fragile governance structure in Somalia, as well as the threat posed by al-Shabaab, an al-Qa'ida-aligned extremist group, and other extremists/militants."*

*Al-Shabaab has demonstrated an intent and capabilities to target civil aviation operations in the territory*

and airspace of Somalia through a variety of means, including the use of an insider to smuggle a concealed IED onto a civil aircraft, use of anti-aircraft-capable weapons, and direct and indirect attacks on Somali airports.

Al-Shabaab has frequently targeted Aden Adde International Airport (HCMM) with attacks using indirect fire, small arms fire and vehicle-borne IEDs. Al-Shabaab has conducted multiple mortar attacks targeting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) at Aden Adde International Airport (HCMM), and has done so as recently as January 1, 2019. Al-Shabaab frequently conducts vehicle-borne IED attacks targeting Western interests and public venues in Mogadishu, including detonating vehicle-borne IEDs near malls (February 2019), hotels (November 2018) and near a security check point close to Aden Adde International Airport (HCMM) (June 2019).

In addition, al-Shabaab is assessed to have access to anti-aircraft-capable weapons presenting a risk to U.S. civil aviation operations at altitudes below FL260."

Our recommendation is to **avoid the airspace of Somalia entirely**. The situation on the ground is highly unstable and there is an inherent risk to civilians and aircraft. The central government has little control of the major cities and ports with ongoing attacks from extremist militants targeting civilians. For more information, check Somalia's dedicated page on SafeAirspace.net

