

Iraq ATC strike - update

Declan Selleck
2 November, 2017



At 0800 local this morning, Iraqi controllers returned to work. For the last few days, Iraqi ATC had been on strike for better pay, effectively closing the Baghdad FIR and intermittently Baghdad and Basra airports. An 80nm in trail requirement has been removed. Military controllers, pictured above, who had been running ORBI/Baghdad Airport have completed their duties.

Local ATC controllers tell us that the strike is over – they are running what they call ‘ops normal’ for two weeks, before they will/may strike again as negotiations continue. Inside word is that a number of local controllers have been fired, and Serco were providing most of the staff to cover the centre. Baghdad FIR Control Centre and Iraqi Airports are running normally – for now.

We are still expecting the FAA to remove the restriction for US operators using the Baghdad FIR, this is a separate issue. No further news on that just yet.

Baghdad FIR still reopening - but wait a little

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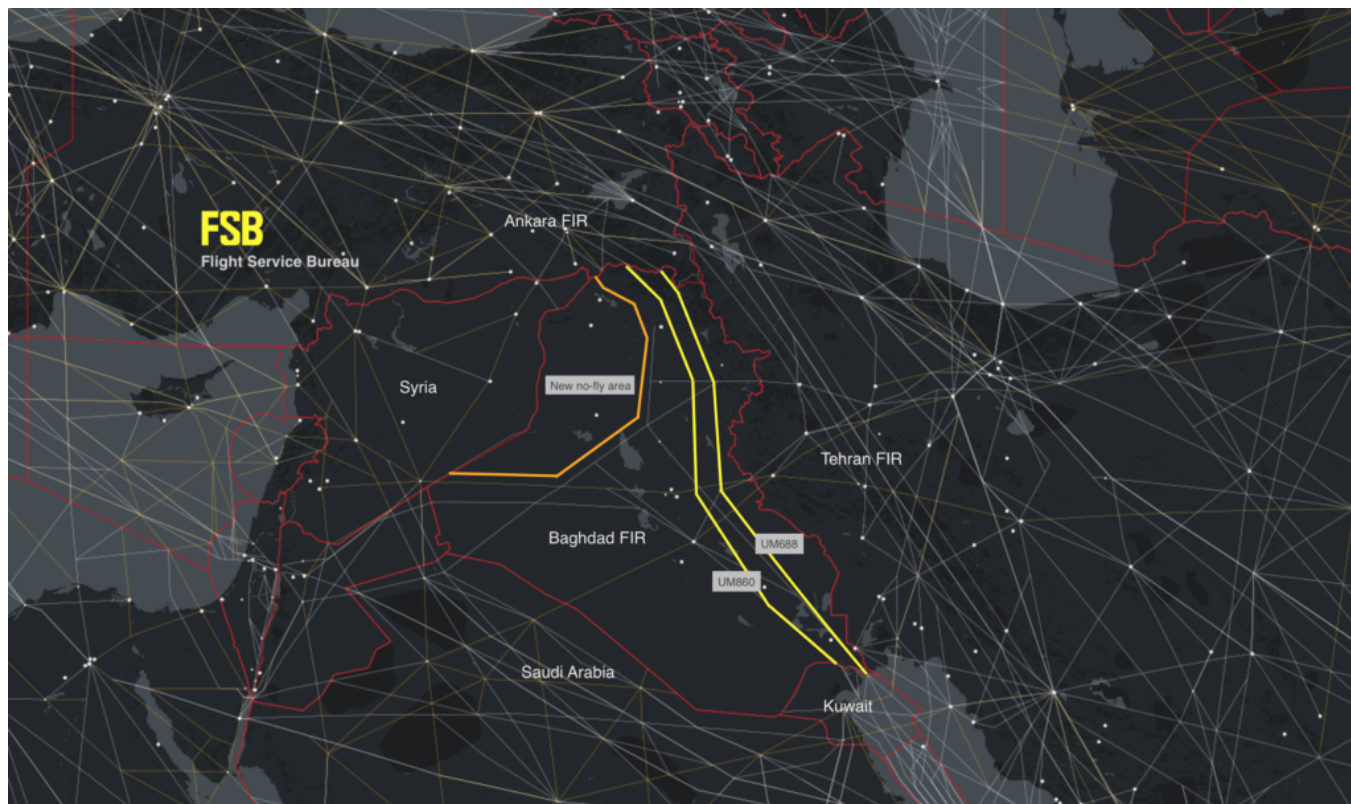


So, last week we told you that **Iraqi Airspace was about to re-open to international overflights**. It still is, though the bit where it was going to happen this week is no longer true.

The FAA were about to hit 'publish' on a Notam this past Monday, which would have enabled US airlines to start overflying Iraq again. The text of this Notam included:

- An amendment to the existing Iraq restriction
- **An authorisation for US airlines and operators to overfly Iraq at or above FL260**

But then, a military operation by Iraqi forces to take control of Kirkuk from the Kurds the same day, created concern as to overflight safety. **Kirkuk sits pretty much underneath the UM860 airway** on the map below.



So for now, do nothing and wait. It seems the situation is de-escalating, and we expect now that the Notam may be issued as early as next week.

Once that happens, we'd expect other countries to follow suit and allow overflights in the same way, meaning that these two airways will become busy again.

Keep an eye out, we'll let you know.

See also:

- 12 October 2017, "Iraq Airspace to re-open for overflights"