

Libya Airspace Update March 2022

OPSGROUP Team

29 March, 2022



We haven't mentioned Libya in a while. Our last in-depth look was back in 2019, which is several years and a whole lot of Covid ago. So, what is the current situation and does it look likely that the country will be safe to overfly anytime soon?

Any alerts to know about?

In the first half of 2021, the Libya situation did change somewhat, with signs that security and stability in the country might be improving.

In June 2021, a 'fragile' ceasefire appeared to be holding, despite increased military activity on the western border with Algeria. The ceasefire came after a UN led agreement was put in place and was implemented in April 2021.

Egypt and Libya saw **a resumption of passenger flights**, along with Malta from April 2021. However, there are very limited international operations, the majority being domestic within the country.

What's been happening recently?

The security situation has reportedly deteriorated through the start of 2022, with intermittent fighting and armed clashes occurring regularly between rival militia groups. These groups are backed by competing geopolitical parties and the overall situation is **very volatile and complicated**.

In fact, the UN led elections at the start of 2022 and a new Prime Minister was brought in with the hope of unifying the country, but sadly this does not, so far, seem to have resolved what is described as an *"intensifying political crisis"*.

The fighting has led to **significant damage to infrastructure**, particularly to power supplies across the country, and to road systems. Disruption and security concerns on the ground are common. Civil unrest including protests and strikes occur relatively frequently.

Islamic State militants do conduct operations in the country, although these are primarily restricted to the southern regions. **Attacks on high profile locations**, including international airports, remain likely.

The FAA Prohibition.

The US **extended their airspace warning** in 2021, updating their **SFAR 112** to run until least March 2023.

You can read all about it in depth here, but the general summary is **don't overfly HLLL/Tripoli FIR except for altitudes at or above FL300 "outside of Libyan territorial airspace"** (the international bit over the southern Mediterranean sea).

Check out Safeairspace for other state warnings and prohibitions as we update this regularly.



Airport Options.

HLLT/Tripoli airport remains closed following significant damage to many of the airport facilities.

HLLM/Mitiga is the main international airport. A major attack in May 2020 resulted in damage to parked aircraft, terminal and runway. Jet fuel tanks were also set on fire. The airport was also closed in January 2020 due to a rocket attack. Prior to this, airstrikes in the area made it critically high risk and dangerous.

HLMS/Misrata and HLLB/Benghazi are also operational for international flights.

HLMS/Misrata has a single runway 11,155' with VOR DME approach only.

HLLB/Benghazi is a much better equipped airport offering minor airframe and engine maintenance facilities, two 11,811' (3600m) runways with an ILS to 33L, and VOR DME or LCTR approaches to the other

runways. However, Al-Qaeda linked militants are reportedly active in this general area.

HLLS/Sabha also has an 11,811' runway with ILS to 13 and VOR DME to 31.

HLGT/Ghat has an 11,811' runway but no precision approach and is relatively lacking in maintenance and support facilities.

The Airspace.

Entering the airspace without prior contact may result in aircraft being **“engaged by air defense systems”**. This message was passed to Malta ATC in April 2020.

Militia stated in 2020 that certain areas around major cities were **no-fly zones**, and there was a very real risk they could attempt to shoot down any aircraft which attempted to fly to HLLM/Mitiga airport in particular.

The northern airspace borders the Mediterranean sea and Maltese airspace, and caution should be taken if routing over this region to not **accidentally detour into Libyan airspace**.

Aircraft operating east/west particularly from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, or Egypt and further east, can **fly through Maltese airspace** and this does not pose a significant detour to avoid Libyan airspace.

Suitable alternate airports are available along these routes.

What Libya says.

We occasionally get contacted by **Libyan ATC** to update us on the situation from their perspective, because often what is said (and assessed) via media reports does not match what those in a country experience.

Their most recent feedback (early 2022) was this:

- International airlines are operating into HLLM/Mitiga and HLMS/Misrata without (apparent) incident
- There are passenger flights from Tunisia operating 3 times a week, and several cargo flights per week
- Overflying east/west is considered safe, north/safe requires some more information for a full assessment
- VHF ATC services over international waters are reliable

What Malta says (because they're right next door).

- The situation has improved over the last few months but there is not much transparency as to the real state of affairs in terms of ATM/CNS provision in the HLLL/FIR.
- Libyan airspace is entirely procedural and there must be huge swathes of airspace where the service provision is either limited or unreliable especially in the domain of air-ground communications. We do not know the status of the international / national aerodromes in Libya as their AIP does not seem to be updated regularly (understating it here).
- We are also aware of military activity over the high-seas which is either operating as OAT or not in control with Tripoli ACC / Benghazi ACC including RPAs. We are not aware how RPAs are being integrated in the airspace, if at all. GPS jamming could also be an issue.

- The issue of 5A-registered aircraft which are banned from EU airspace has not been resolved and we still have a lot of restrictions from EU States including Malta banning all flights departing from HL aerodromes from entering EU national airspace due to security issues.
- So whilst the military / conflict situation might have improved on the ground there is not much evidence to support the claim that all is safe and sound.

This was sent in **December 2021, prior to the UN-led elections**. The continued instability following these elections is what led us to pop this update out now.

Our risk assessment.

Libya remains volatile. Safety and security on the ground is not good, and there is a **significant risk to aircraft overflying due to the conflict and weapons available to militia groups**. Despite feedback from local ATC, and reports that some operators do overfly the country, we continue to advise against it.

It remains a Level 1: Do Not Fly region on Safeairspace.

Have you operated in or over?

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Midweek Briefing: Taiwan ADS-B requirement, Costa Rica volcano

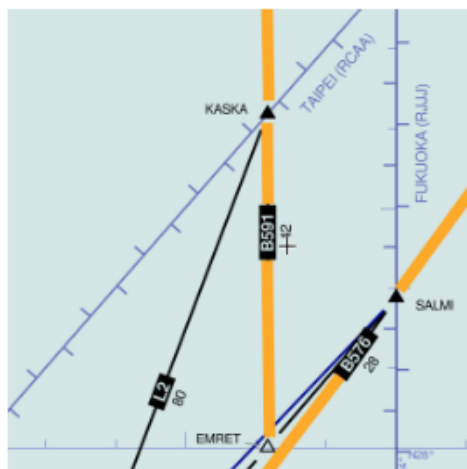
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INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

ISSUED BY FLIGHT SERVICE BUREAU

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Taiwan ADS-B requirement 21SEP Yesterday, Taiwan pushed the requirement for ADS-B above FL290 for all aircraft, back to 2020 – as a fast approaching deadline of December this year was looming. Read the article.

Costa Rica volcano 21SEP MROC/San Jose, Costa Rica has reopened after the eruption of the Turrialba volcano on Monday. A risk of further closures continues. Read the article.

OPZZ/Pakistan Some airspace in the north of the country (Kashmir region) has been closed by the Pakistan CAA. Details are unclear but reports indicate Gilgit, Skardu and Chitral Airports are affected by the closure.

BIKF/Keflavik Departing KEF eastbound? Icelandic ATC would love you to file the following as a standard route: PIXUM PETUX ORTAV ODPEX, or 63N022W CELLO if you're planning to cross 10W at GOMUP or south of.

EDDL/Dusseldorf has closed 05L/23R for a couple of days to remove a WW2 bomb. Some delays at peak times may result.

HLGT/Ghat, Libya Three foreign nationals were kidnapped along the road that leads to Ghat Airport on 19SEP, located in the Fezzan province along the southwest border with Algeria. The foreigners were construction workers employed by the Italian-owned Conicos company to service Ghat Airport. There are numerous armed militia and terrorist groups active in the area and the foreigners were said to be operating under discretion due to the security risk.

EDHL/Lubeck will closed on Oct 4th for repairs – all day.

ENGM/Oslo will introduce new RNP AR approaches in November, available to all runways. Auth from Norwegian CAA is required to use them.

FKKD/Douala now requires PPR 72 hours prior arrival, for non-scheduled flights, due to upcoming space restrictions as a result of WIP. You can make requests directly to Airport admin at pce.douala@adcsa.aero.

GBZZ/Gambia In a change to procedure, Overflight Permits, and Landing Permits for traffic operating to GBYD/Banjul, are now issued by the Department of Flight Safety Standards at the GCAA.

HCMM/Mogadishu has issued a security reminder to operators: "OPERATORS SHOULD EXER EXTREME CTN AND FULLY ASSESS THE POTENTIAL FOR RISKS TO FLT SAFETY AND SECURITY WHEN PLANNING OR CONDUCTING OPS INTO MOGADISHU AIRPORT DUE TO LACK OF INFORMATION ON ARMED CONFLICT AND LACK OF AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION."

FAZZ/South Africa The CAA has updated its warnings for operators, with new guidance for two airspace blocks: that affected by the Syrian conflict – namely Baghdad, Damascus, and Tehran FIRs; and that affected by recent concerns over the Northern Sinai – their advice is to overfly at FL260 or higher.

LMML/Malta airshow coming up on 24-25 Sept, multiple restrictions, check before operating or filing as alternate.

FZZZ/DRC Congo Since September 19 large-scale demonstrations have been resulting in violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces in Kinshasa and elsewhere in the country. The situation is particularly tense in Kinshasa where violence has caused casualties. These demonstrations could continue over the next few days and the situation could further degenerate. The sole road to the Kinshasa airport could be blocked and some flights have been cancelled.

OJZZ/Jordan It's White Stork migration season, and Jordan has issued warnings for all of its airports, for crews to be mindful of the high chance of presence of large flocks of them on arrival and departure.

SKED/Bogota has some comms issues on north/south bound routes to Peru (Lima FIR); 10 minute separation is applied between aircraft on these routes until at least Sept 26th.

KZZZ/USA For some good reading, the FAA (thanks Andy for passing this on), have updated their Aviation Weather guidance doc. This is the first revision to the document since 1975.

Input: ATC, Pilots, Dispatchers: Any topical items that you think should be going out to the community? Let us know, and we'll get your message out there. tellus@opsgroup.co.

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