

# EASA withdraws Iran airspace warning. Why?

OPSGROUP Team

3 November, 2021



EASA has withdrawn their Iran CZIB, so what does this actually mean for the safety and security of air operations there?

## What is an EASA CZIB?

First up, a CZIB is a Conflict Zone Information Bulletin (if you aren't familiar with the term.)

These are put together by EASA based on aeronautical publications issued by worldwide states, and an assessment of the overall known risks and threats which EASA do via their *Integrated EU Aviation Security Risk Assessment Group*. Quite a mouthful. The point is they are **sharing info on conflict zones to help operators do their own risk assessment** on whether to head in there or not.

OK. So, when we take a look at EASA's CZIBs they actually are more of a **summary of references to other state and authority warnings**. EASA CZIBs do not *in themselves*, appear to make an assessment of risk. They just share what everyone else says and contain a recommendation which more often than not goes something like this –

*“Operators should take this information and any other relevant information into account in their own risk assessments, alongside any available guidance or directions from their national authority as appropriate.”*

If you want to check out their active ones you can do so here.

EASA updated a large number of them in October 2021. 10 in fact, which included the likes of Iraq, Libya, Mali, Afghanistan, South Sudan... interestingly, **they did not update their Iranian CZIB**.

Instead, they withdrew it.

## Why did they withdraw the Iranian CZIB?

**That's the big question.**

Given that the EASA CZIBs do little more than summarise actual risk statements from other states, and considering other major states still have valid warnings for Iran, it does seem rather odd.

EASA have suggested their decision to withdraw this CZIB is based off an agreement from a recent meeting in which they decided that *the situation in Iran has positively improved allowing to withdraw the current CZIB and to issue as replacement an Information Note shared within the European commercial aviation community on a 'Need-to-know' basis.*

So, when EASA withdraws a CZIB, **this does not mean individual states have also withdrawn their own warnings.** We have not seen the 'Information Note'.

- Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 117 – Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX) and KICZ A0050/20 issued 29 October 2020 (see Appendix 1)
- Transport Canada AIC 26/21 issued 12 August 2021 (see Appendix 2)
- United Kingdom AIP ENR 1.1 issued 15 July 2021 (see Appendix 3)
- German AIC 14/21 issued 07 October 2021 (see Appendix 4)
- AIC France Circular A 07/21 issued 20 May 2021 (see Appendix 5)
- India DGCA Notice issued 22 June 2019 (see Appendix 6)
- UAE Safety Decision 2020-01 issued 08 January 2020 (see Appendix 7)
- Swedish Transport Agency AIC A2/2020 issued 30 January 2020 (see Appendix 8)

Iran airspace at altitudes below Flight Level (FL) 250.

All still valid

You can click below to read the (now withdrawn) EASA CZIB.



European Union Aviation Safety Agency

**CZIB No.: CZIB-2020-01R2**

**Conflict Zone Information  
Bulletin**

Withdrawn!

**We think the risk remains.**

In 2020, Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 was shot down in the vicinity of OIIE/Tehran, by the Iranian Air Defense system when it was misidentified. **Iran possess significant anti-aircraft weaponry.** This weaponry is in place due to ongoing conflict within Iran, and that has not changed.



The Iranian 'Air Dome' Defense system

As with all risk, likelihood is dependant on **capability** (they have that), and **intent**.

*Intent* is an interesting one. They didn't *intend* to shoot anyone down with their Air Defense systems, and they don't usually fire their anti-aircraft weaponry without good reason, which means a **risk of misidentification is far higher during times of active attack**, when enemy forces are being targeted.

**But the situation in Iran remains volatile**, and so the risk level remains.

### What is the risk?

A fair few airlines do overfly Iran. The ones that don't generally have political reasons not too – **this doesn't mean the risk isn't there**. The political tensions between some countries and Iran mean the risk of being targeted or experiencing security threats on the ground is far higher.

If the state your aircraft is registered in is on relatively good political terms with Iran then overflying the country above a safe flight level poses less risk *if you remain at that level*.

**Descend below FL260-ish and it is a different situation.** And if you overfly anywhere, there is a chance you will need to descend and even divert in for certain emergencies. So your risk assessment when "just overflying" needs to take that into account.

Remember – just because you only want to overfly and don't plan on going into Iran does not mean the risk does not apply to you. If there is a possibility you **might have to divert** in then the risk must be taken into account.

This is why operators who do fly into Iran generally have "TOD" checks – a SATCOM call, for example, to their company to confirm the security situation on the ground prior to heading in below that safe altitude. Basically, a check to ask if stuff is kicking off or not.

## What do other states say?

The UK CAA Notam EGTT V0012/21 was issued in July 2021. This covers a “general” airspace security warning for a whole bunch of countries, including Iran, and suggests you go check the UK AIP En-route 1.1 section 1.4.5 for more info.

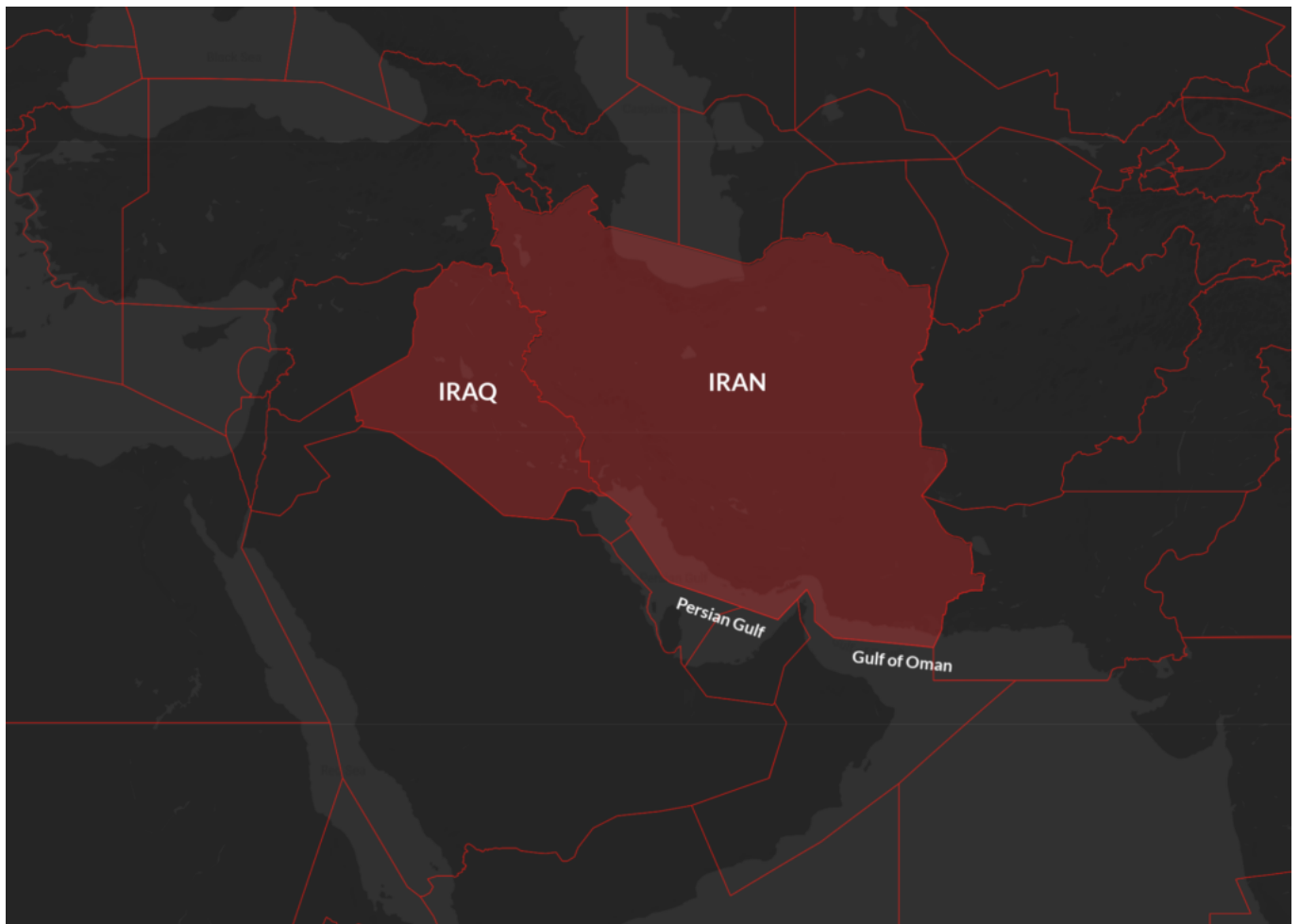
1.4.5 says there is a “*potential risk to aviation overflying this area at less than 25,000ft*” because of “*dedicated anti-aviation weaponry*”. France say don’t go below FL320. **The US says don’t go at all.**

The risk is still there, and that risk was actually summed up pretty well in the now withdrawn CZIB – “*due to the hazardous security situation, and poor coordination between civil aviation and military operations, there is a risk of misidentification of civil aircraft.*”

If you want a summary of all the current warnings and details, visit our Safeairspace page.

## The current situation in Iran.

The situation is volatile. There is **significant political conflict** between Iran and some of their regional neighbours. There is also internal conflict. The **primary risk** remains the potential for misidentification from the air defence systems, or surface to surface missiles targeting rebels. There are **secondary risks** from ballistic missile tests (often tested without Notams) and GPS jamming.



Both airspaces and the Persian Gulf pose an airspace risk.



## Safeairspace Summary

**Our view is that the removal of the EASA CZIB does not signify any change to the threat level in Iran.** States have not removed their own warnings and so our Safeairspace warning remains the same until such time as further information is provided on how Iran have *positively improved* the situation.

### Want a full briefing?

Just click [here](#). SafeAirspace is our conflict zone and risk database run by OPSGROUP. We continually assesses the risk to operators the world over. It presents that information in a way that will always be simple, clear, and free. **You can also sign up to our new fortnightly risk briefing** that contains only what you need to know, simply by subscribing.

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# UIA flight 752: Iran military shot down plane after chain of errors

David Mumford  
3 November, 2021



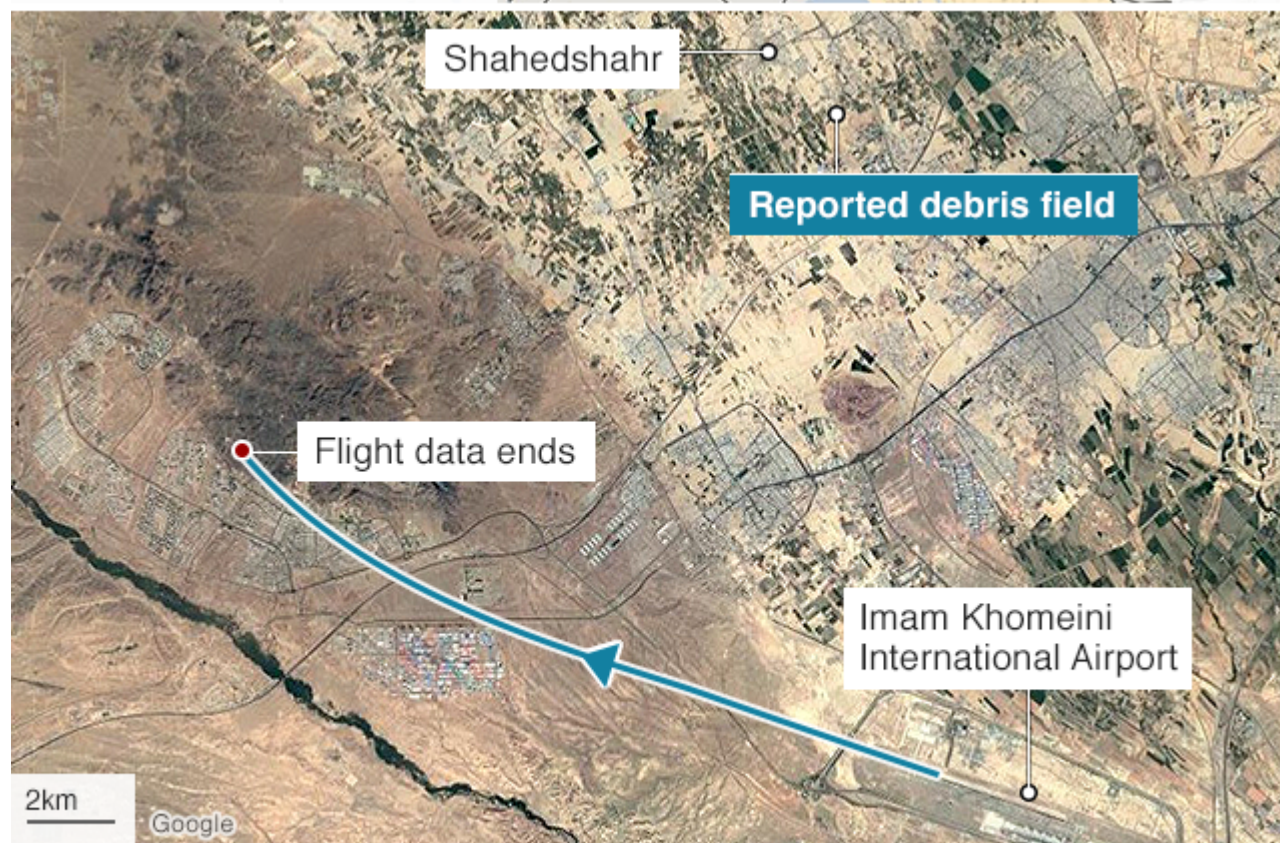
Iran has released its first official report into the shoot-down of UIA flight 752 in Tehran on Jan 9. They blame a **misaligned missile battery, miscommunication between troops and their commanders, and a decision to fire without authorization** as the major factors which led to the shoot-down of the plane by Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

All 176 people on board were killed when the plane was hit by two missiles shortly after take-off in Tehran.

Iran initially denied responsibility for the incident, only admitting fault days later after Western nations presented extensive evidence that Iran had shot down the plane.



# Flight PS752 crashed shortly after taking off



Indicative route from previous flight shown

Source: [flightradar24.com](https://flightradar24.com)

BBC

Iran's air defences had been on high alert at the time. Just hours prior to the shoot-down, the US FAA issued "Emergency Order" Notams **banning all US operators from overflying the airspace of Iraq and Iran**. This was in response to an Iranian missile strike on US military bases in Iraq, which had just occurred the same night.

A full version of the report has not been made publicly available, but excerpts have been published by state news agency Fars. It places the blame entirely on those manning the missile system, and details a series of key moments where the shoot-down could have been avoided, the main two being:

- **The surface-to-air missile system had recently been relocated and was not properly calibrated. As a result, it misidentified the civilian plane as a hostile object.**
- **Those manning the system could not communicate with their command centre, and fired on the plane without receiving official approval.**

*"If each had not arisen, the aircraft would not have been targeted," the report said.*

It also notes that the flight had done nothing unusual prior to the missile launch, with its transponder and other data being broadcast. It claims that the troops manning the missile system tried to contact the Coordination Centre with details of a potential target but they did not manage to get through, and that firing on the aircraft under these circumstances was against approved protocol:

*"The system operator began analysing the observable information and categorised the detected target as a threat... At 02:44:41, without receiving any response from the Coordination Centre, the air defence unit operator fired a missile at the threatening target he had detected... Under the applicable procedures, if the defence system operator cannot establish communication with the Coordination Centre and does not receive the fire command, they are not authorised to fire."*

After repeated delays, Iran has said it will release the aircraft's black box to officials in France on July 20, where Ukrainian and French experts are expected to examine it.

## **Airspace warnings**

In the days and weeks following the shoot-down, several other countries followed the US in issuing airspace warnings of their own for Iran, including: the UK, Ukraine, Canada, Germany, and France. The US and Ukraine are the only countries to have issued **outright flight bans** on Iranian airspace, but all the others **advise against landing or overflying the country at the lower flight levels**. Check [SafeAirspace.net](https://SafeAirspace.net) for a full summary.

## **Traffic flows**

It's worth considering that most airlines other than Middle Eastern carriers are still **avoiding Iran**. For traffic that normally operates through the Tehran FIR, a predominant alternative for east-west flights into the Dubai area is a southerly routing via Saudi Arabia and Egypt. There are warnings for both of these airspaces as well. Northerly reroutes for Europe-Asia flights are predominantly using a Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan routing. If entering Afghanistan airspace, note the current warnings there too.

## **Unfamiliar routes**

For many operators wanting to avoid Iran, you may be using routes that are unfamiliar. Take the time to ensure you have the full package of charts, are aware of the risks in each FIR, are aware of the potential for GPS outages en-route (especially in the Turkish, Tel Aviv, Amman, and Jeddah FIRs), and have considered drift down over mountainous areas on the northerly routes.

## **Advice**

Every air operation different. We know OPSGROUP has a huge variety of members – some conducting routine airline flights, some business aviation, charter flights, private ops, military, government flights. Therefore, offering blanket advice is difficult. You must undertake your own risk assessment, but paying



close attention to the international warnings as well as what other carriers are doing is a good place to start.

On SafeAirspace.net, we continue to list Iran as **Level One: Do Not Fly**. The same goes for **Iraq**. Outside those two countries, just consider carefully what connections to the current situation there may be. Nowhere in the Middle East is without some level of risk.

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## Iran and Iraq airspace restrictions

David Mumford  
3 November, 2021



***Please note: This article refers to the airspace warnings for Iran and Iraq following the shutdown of UIA flight 752 in Tehran in Jan 2020. We are keeping the article here for reference purposes only. For updated airspace warnings, check [safeairspace.net](https://safeairspace.net)***

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Following the events of Jan 8, when an Iranian missile strike on US military bases in Iraq was quickly followed by the shooting down of Ukraine Int Airlines flight 752 in Tehran by the Iranian Armed Forces, multiple western countries issued warnings to **avoid the airspace of Iraq and Iran completely**.

But in the weeks that followed, some of these countries issued updated advice, **allowing overflights to resume at the higher flight levels**.

*Here's a summary of what the main countries/agencies who regularly publish airspace warnings have said with regards to Iraq and Iran:*

### The US

As of Mar 12, the US prohibit all flights in the airspace of Iraq and Iran, but allow flights in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. Here are the details for each:

On Feb 27, the US loosened its restrictions on Iraq, issuing an updated Notam and Background Notice document which advised that US operators were now permitted to overfly Iraq at FL320 or above. They said there has been a de-escalation in military activity and diminishing political tensions in the region, but there was still a risk at the lower flight levels from armed militias who are likely responsible for multiple recent attacks on US armed forces in Iraq, as well as rocket attacks targeting the US Embassy and ORBI/Baghdad International Airport.

Then on Mar 12, the US issued an emergency order that once again banned US operators from overflying Iraq with immediate effect. This came after US warplanes hit militia weapons storage facilities in southern Iraq in a strike designed to destroy rockets like those fired at US troops earlier this week.

The US downgraded its airspace warning for the overwater airspace in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman on Feb 17 – the new guidance now just advises caution in this region, and recommends to avoid the airways nearest to the OIIX/Tehran FIR whenever possible, to reduce the risk of miscalculation or misidentification by air defence systems. The crucial change with this new warning is that **overflights in this region are now permitted**. So for US operators wanting to transit the OKAC/Kuwait, OBBB/Bahrain, OMAE/Emirates and OOMM/Muscat FIRs – you can now do so.

The US ban on the airspace of Iran is still in place – US operators are prohibited from entering the OIIX/Tehran FIR.



### Germany

Germany just advises caution for both Iraq and Iran overflights – at no point since the events of Jan 8 have they issued outright bans on the airspace of these two countries.

### France

France initially issued a Notam on Jan 9 advising operators to avoid the airspace of Iraq and Iran. Then on Feb 14, they changed their advice for Iran, saying that the only chunk of airspace which should be avoided



is the western half of the country (everywhere west of 54 Degrees East longitude); they recommended that overflights of the eastern half should be at or above FL320. This guidance was then incorporated into AIC 14/20. The French Notam for Iraq lapsed on Feb 12, and was not renewed – therefore the French advice for Iraq has reverted back to that contained in AIC 14/20 which says that overflights should be at or above FL320, and only on certain airways.

### **The UK**

The UK published Notams on Jan 9 prohibiting operators from entering the airspace of both Iraq and Iran. Then on Jan 17, they issued a new Notam for Iran, and cancelled the one for Iraq, advising operators to revert back to the guidance contained in the AIP ENR 1.1 (1.4.5). Bottom line, the UK advice for both countries is now this: do not overfly below 25,000ft AGL.

### **EASA**

EASA published a notice on Jan 11 specifically warning operators against overflying Iraq and Iran. They said this should be taken as a precautionary measure, following the events of Jan 8. EASA don't normally issue blanket warnings/recommendations like this. Then on Jan 29, they withdrew that advice, and reaffirmed the position previously stated in their Conflict Zone Information Bulletins (CZIB) – Iraq overflights should be avoided except on two specific airways (UM688 and UM860), and Iran overflights should be avoided below FL250.

### **Further discussion**

- The **#FlightOps** channel on Slack is open for Iran/Iraq discussion
- Email [team@ops.group](mailto:team@ops.group) with any intel or analysis you can share

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## **Risk assessing Iran ops - the UIA 737 may have been shot down**

Mark Zee

3 November, 2021



**Special Update Thursday 09JAN: Members, please see either your email or this post in the Members forum, for a special briefing and update.**

08JAN: Iran/Iraq Information page activated with latest information.

The cause of the crash of Ukraine International Airlines (UIA) AUI/PS752 on departure from Tehran is not yet determined, and given political circumstances, may not be clarified beyond reasonable doubt anytime soon.

Purely from the perspective of making a risk assessment for operations to Tehran, and Iran in general, however, **we would recommend the starting assumption to be that this was a shootdown event**, similar to MH17 – until there is clear evidence to the contrary.

Images seen by OPSGROUP, shown below, show obvious projectile holes in the fuselage and a wing section. Whether that projectile was an engine part, or a missile fragment is still conjecture, but in making a decision as to whether to operate to Iran, erring on the side of caution would dictate that you do not, until there is clear information as to the cause.

Obviously, there is also the wider regional risk as indicated through the US FAA Notams issued late Tuesday night. US operators are covered by these clear and specific Notams – do not operate to Iran, or Iraq, or operate in the Persian/Oman Gulf area.

Other operators are free to make their own judgement, but should note that a majority of non-US international carriers have elected to avoid both countries for the time being.

See also:

- OPSGROUP Article: FAA Bans Flights Over Iraq And Iran Following Missile Strike On US Base
- OPSGROUP Article: Germany publishes new concerns for Iraq overflights

*Images from ISNA, Reuters; marking of projectile areas from JACDEC.*







**ISNA PHOTO**

Abolfazle Mahrokh

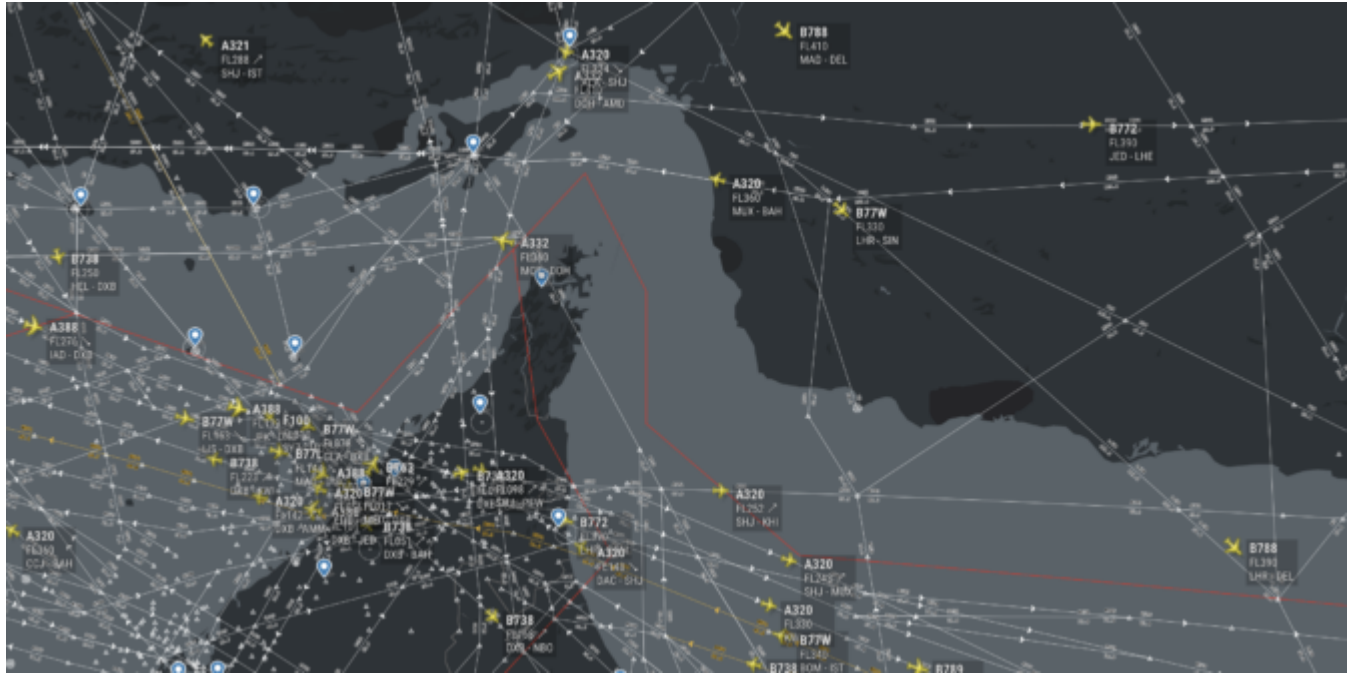


 **REUTERS**

# US issues Emergency Order - No Fly Zone for Civil Aircraft - Iran

Mark Zee

3 November, 2021

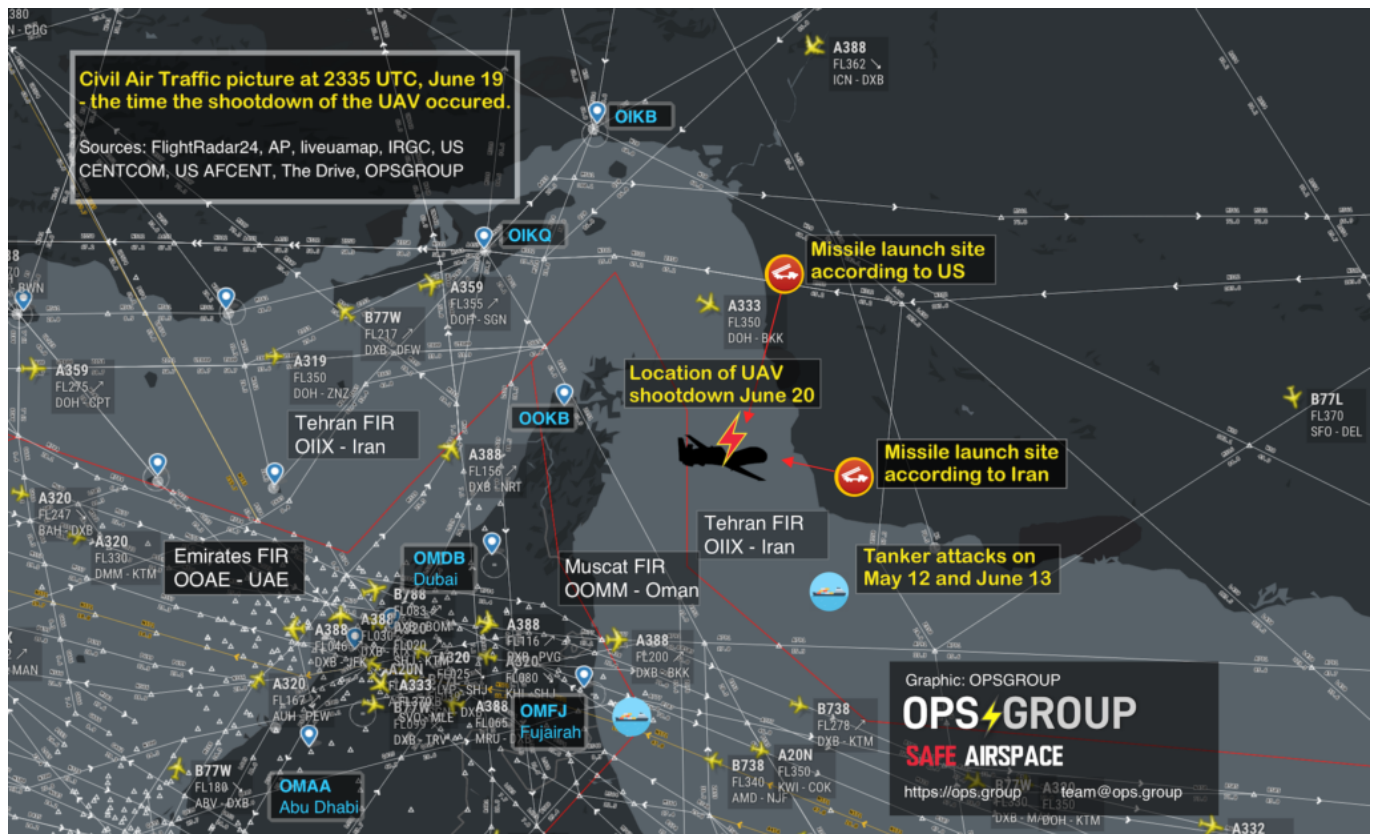


**The FAA has issued an Emergency Order to US Civil Aircraft**, prohibiting all American aircraft operators from entering the Tehran Flight Information Region (OIIX) FIR in the area above the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

Notam A0019/19 was issued at 0148 UTC, June 21st.

The Notam specifically prohibits any airline or aircraft operator from flying within Iranian airspace in the region that the US drone was shot down in on June 20th.





Some airlines had already reported suspending operations in Iranian airspace. This Notam ensures that US operators cannot operate in the area. Although the official applicability is to US aircraft only, since MH17 all countries rely on advice from the US, the UK, France and Germany to highlight airspace risk.

**The full Notam follows (bolded parts by OPSGROUP):**

A0019/19 NOTAMN Q) KICZ/QRDLP/IV/NBO/AE/000/999/

A) KICZ PART 1 OF 2

B) 1906210148

C) PERM

E) SECURITY..UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PROHIBITION AGAINST CERTAIN FLIGHTS IN THE OVERWATER AREA OF THE TEHRAN FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (FIR) (OIIX) ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN ONLY.

ALL FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN THE OVERWATER AREA OF THE TEHRAN FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (FIR) (OIIX) ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN ONLY ARE PROHIBITED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO HEIGHTENED MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND INCREASED POLITICAL TENSIONS IN THE REGION, WHICH PRESENT AN INADVERTENT RISK TO U.S. CIVIL AVIATION OPERATIONS AND POTENTIAL FOR MISCALCULATION OR MIS-IDENTIFICATION.**THE RISK TO U.S. CIVIL AVIATION IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE IRANIAN SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SHOOT DOWN OF A U.S. UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM ON 19 JUNE 2019 WHILE IT WAS OPERATING IN THE VICINITY OF CIVIL AIR ROUTES ABOVE THE GULF OF OMAN.**

**A. APPLICABILITY.** THIS NOTAM APPLIES TO: ALL U.S. AIR CARRIERS AND COMMERCIAL OPERATORS; ALL PERSONS EXERCISING THE PRIVILEGES OF AN AIRMAN CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE FAA, EXCEPT SUCH PERSONS OPERATING U.S.-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT FOR A FOREIGN AIR CARRIER; AND ALL OPERATORS OF AIRCRAFT REGISTERED IN THE UNITED STATES, EXCEPT WHERE THE OPERATOR OF SUCH AIRCRAFT IS A FOREIGN AIR CARRIER.

**B. PERMITTED OPERATIONS.** THIS NOTAM DOES NOT PROHIBIT PERSONS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH A (APPLICABILITY) FROM CONDUCTING FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN THE ABOVE NAMED AREA WHEN SUCH OPERATIONS ARE AUTHORIZED EITHER BY ANOTHER AGENCY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE FAA OR BY A DEVIATION, EXEMPTION, OR OTHER AUTHORIZATION ISSUED BY THE FAA ADMINISTRATOR. OPERATORS MUST CALL THE FAA WASHINGTON OPERATIONS CENTER AT 202-267-3333 TO INITIATE COORDINATION FOR FAA AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT OPERATIONS.

**C. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.** IN AN EMERGENCY THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE DECISION AND ACTION FOR THE SAFETY OF THE FLIGHT, THE PILOT IN COMMAND OF AN AIRCRAFT MAY DEVIATE FROM THIS NOTAM TO THE EXTENT REQUIRED BY THAT EMERGENCY.

**THIS NOTAM IS AN EMERGENCY ORDER ISSUED UNDER 49 USC 40113(A) AND 46105(C).**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AT:

[HTTPS://WWW.FAA.GOV/AIR\\_TRAFFIC/PUBLICATIONS/US\\_RESTRICTIONS/](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions/)

Earlier today, we published an article summarizing the risk to Aircraft Operators in the Gulf region - **“The Threat of a Civil Aircraft Shootdown in Southern Iran is Real”**

In addition to the Notam, the FAA Threat Analysis Division have also published background information on the current situation (download that PDF here )

In that document, the FAA says: “Although the exact location of the attack is not yet available, there were numerous civil aviation aircraft operating in the area at the time of the intercept. According to flight tracking applications, the nearest civil aircraft was operating within approximately 45nm of the Global Hawk when it was targeted by the Iranian SAM. FAA remains concerned about the escalation of tension and military activity within close proximity to high volume civil air routes and the Iran’s willingness to use long-range SAMs in international airspace with little to no warning. As a result, there is concern about the potential for misidentification or miscalculation which could result in the inadvertent targeting of civil aviation.”

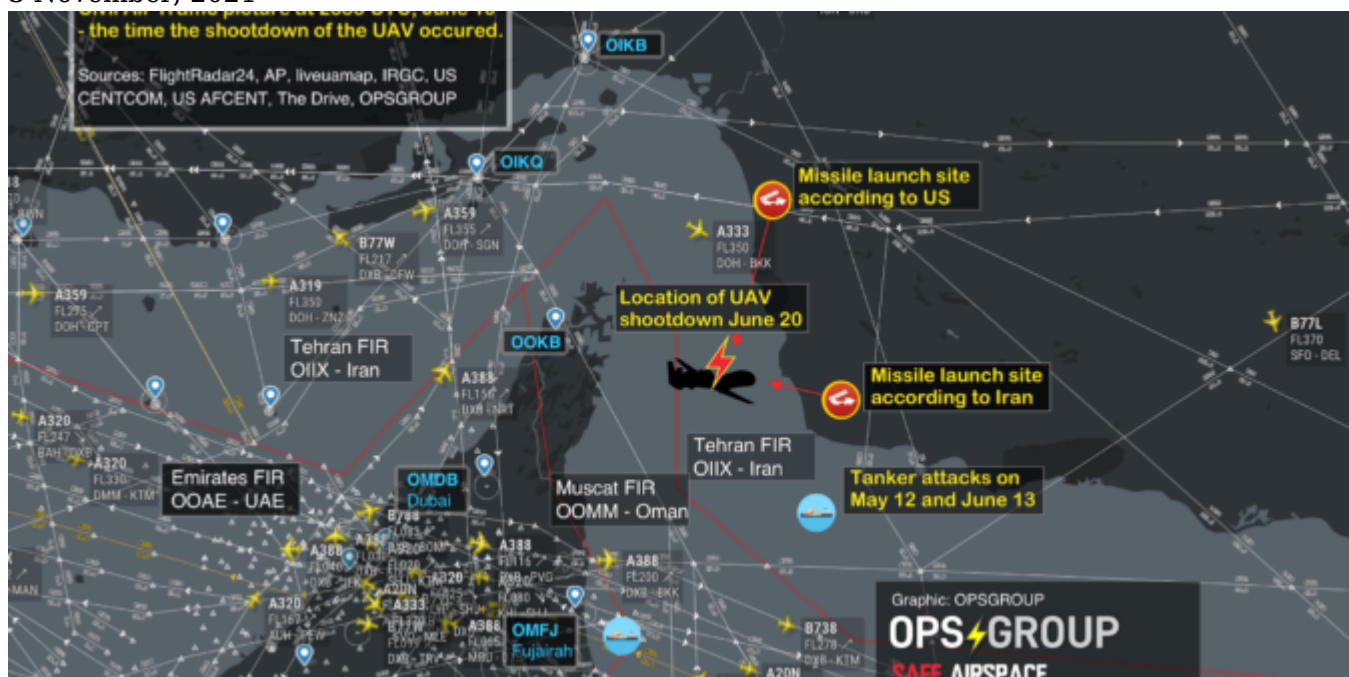
The Iran risk is being monitored at Safe Airspace – the Conflict Zone & Risk Database. The Iran country page also has more information on further overflight considerations in other parts of the Tehran FIR.



# The Threat Of A Civil Aircraft Shootdown In Iran Is Real

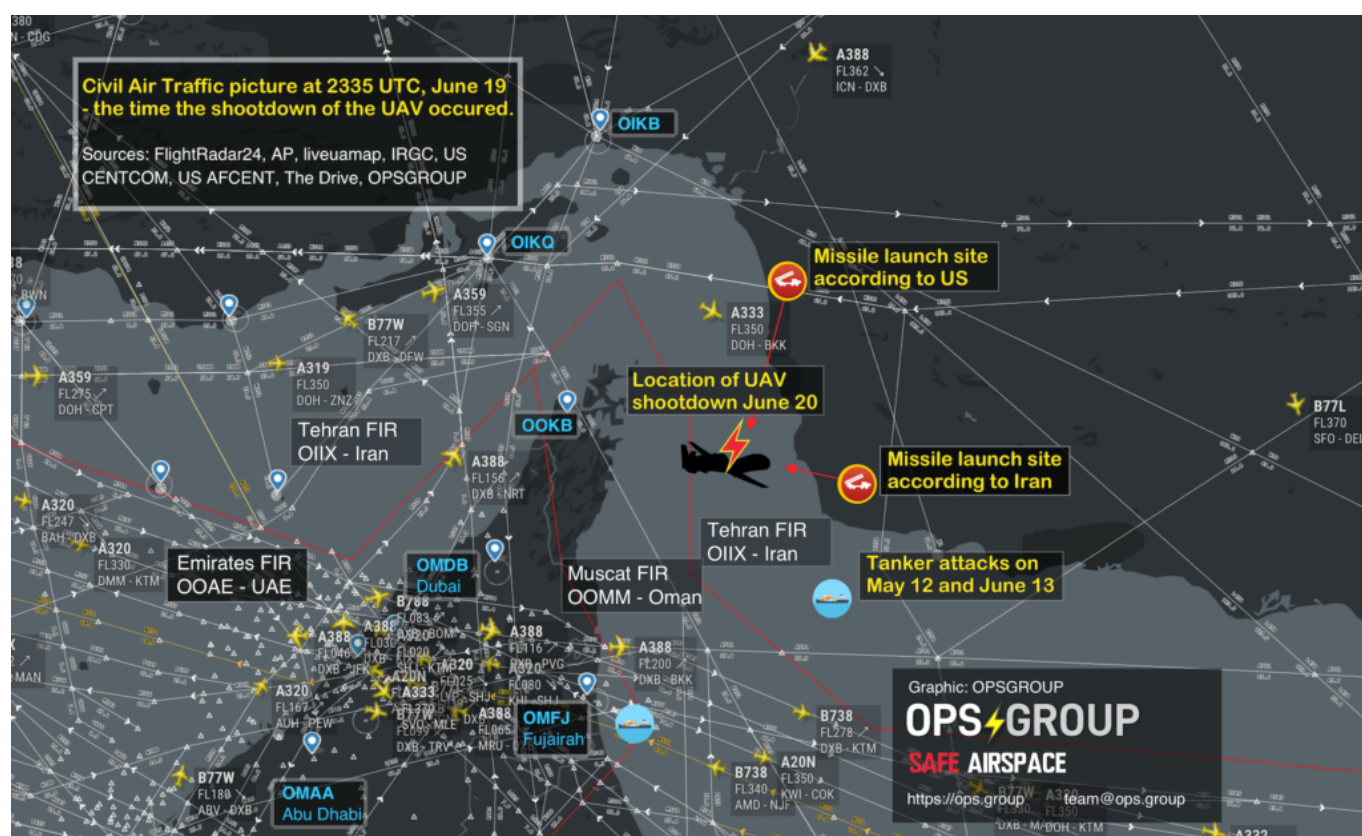
Mark Zee

3 November, 2021



As we know by now, at 23:35Z last night (June 19, UTC), Iran shot down a US UAV on a high-altitude reconnaissance mission in the Straits of Hormuz. This was no small incident. The UAV was a \$200 million aircraft, weighing 32,000 lbs, with the same wingspan as a 737.

Although Iran and the US have slightly different versions of the position of the shooting down in the media, the approximate area is very clear, and marked on the map below, which shows the airspace picture at 2335Z, the time of the shutdown.



A high-res version of this map is available [here](#).

For civil operators, the Straits of Hormuz have always been an area of high military activity, so it's tempting to mark this as 'more of the same'. However, over the last few weeks tension between the US and Iran has heightened, and the launching of a surface to air missile by Iran represents an escalation in the current situation that crosses a threshold – warranting a very close inspection by airlines and aircraft operators overflying, or using airports like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Muscat, and Fujairah.

As we approach five years since MH17, we should remember the build up to that shutdown took several months, and there are the warning signs here that we must pay close attention to. In the lead up to MH17, 16 military aircraft were shot down before MH17 became the 17th. Look closely at the map. Civil aircraft were very close to the site of this incident.

This morning, we sent this out to our members in OPSGROUP:

**OIZZ/Iran** Earlier today, a large US military drone was shot down by Iran over the Strait of Hormuz. The US say it was over international waters, Iran say it was within their FIR. Either way, it means that SAM missiles are now being fired in the area, and that represents an escalation in risk. It appears a 787 was very close to the missile site this morning. Avoiding the Strait of Hormuz area is recommended – misidentification of aircraft is possible. If you are coming close to Iran's FIR, it's essential that you monitor 121.5, as Iran uses this to contact potentially infringing aircraft. Local advice from OPSGROUP members says 'Even if the operator/pilots think they will come close or penetrate Iran's Airspace they should contact Iran Air Defense on 127.8 or 135.1'. If the Iranians have an unidentified aircraft on their radar and not in contact with them they will transmit on guard with the unidentified aircraft coordinates, altitude, squawk (if there is one), direction of travel and then ask this aircraft to identify themselves as they are approaching Iranian ADIZ. Monitor [safeairspace.net/iran](https://safeairspace.net/iran) for the latest.



Last September, when Syria shot down a Russian transport aircraft, we published an article on that risk, and noted *“50 miles away from where the Russian aircraft plunged into the sea on Monday night is the international airway UL620, busy with all the big name airline traffic heading for Beirut and Tel Aviv. If Syria can mistakenly shoot down a Russian ally aircraft, they can also take out your A320 as you cruise past.”* That same risk of misidentification exists here in the Straits of Hormuz.

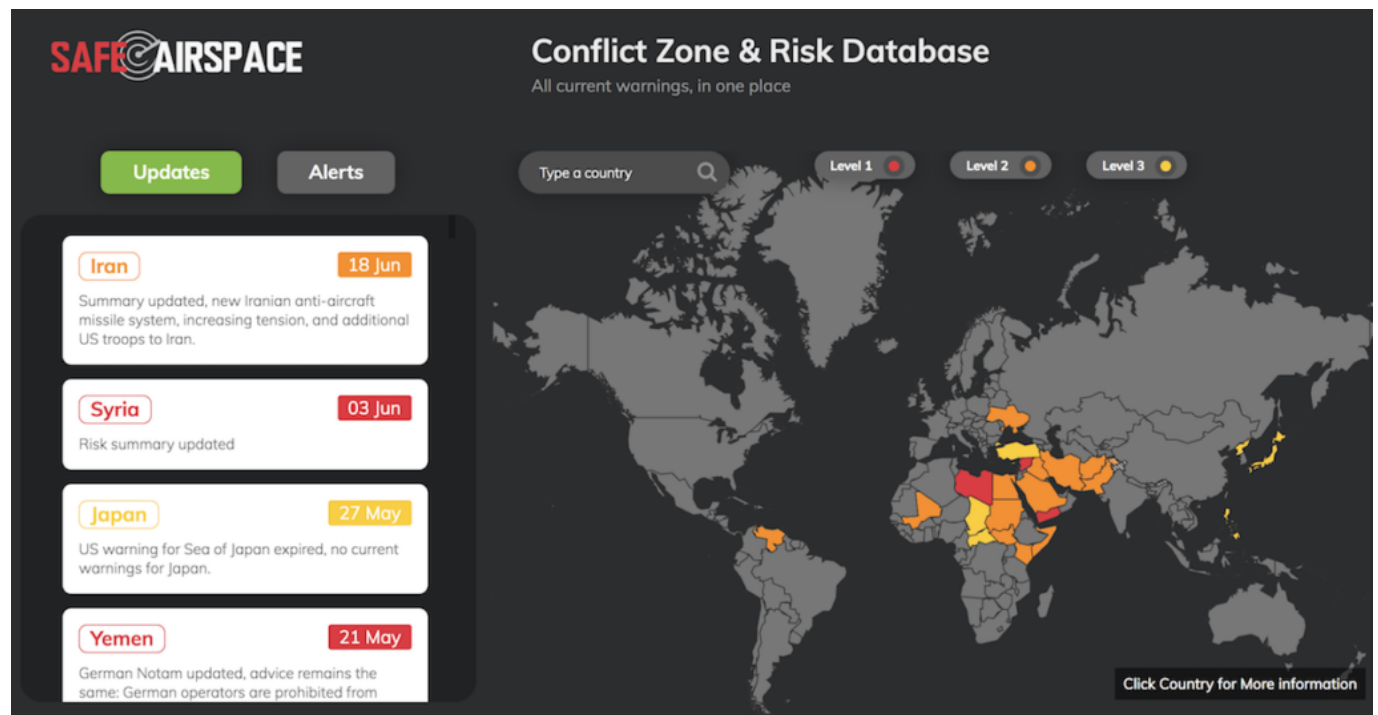
Apart from the misidentification risk, is the risk of a problem with the missile itself. The missile used by Syria in September was a Russian S-200 SAM, which was the same missile type that brought down Siberian Airlines Flight 1812 in 2001. The missile can lock on to the wrong target, and this risk is higher over water. The missile system used by Iran last night was a domestically-built Raad Anti-Aircraft system, similar to the Russian Buk that was used against MH17. Any error in that system could cause it to find another target nearby – another reason not to be anywhere near this part of the Straits of Hormuz.

Bear in mind that as an aircraft operator you won't be getting any guidance from the Civil Aviation Authorities in the region. As we saw with Syria, even when an aircraft had been shot down on their FIR boundary, the only Notams from Cyprus were about firework displays at the local hotels. It won't be any different here. **You need to be the one to decide to avoid the area.**

A further risk, if you needed one, is retaliation by the US. It seems probable that the US will at least try to find an Iranian target to make an example of. If you recall the Iran Air 665 tragedy, back in July 1988, which occurred in the same area, the US mistakenly shot down that aircraft thinking it was an Iranian F-14.

**Bottom line:** we should not be flying passenger aircraft anywhere near warzones. That's the lesson from MH17, and that's the lesson we need to keep applying when risks like this appear on our horizon.

The Iran risk is being monitored at Safe Airspace – the Conflict Zone & Risk Database. The Iran country page also has more information on further overflight considerations in other parts of the Tehran FIR.



Further reading:

- The FAA published guidance in May that we have previously reported on and is still very much valid.



## Sources for this article:

- The Drive
- The Aviationist
- The New York Times
- Safe Airspace
- OPSGROUP members
- Medium: Why are we still flying airline passengers over war zones

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# What's going on in the Strait of Hormuz?

David Mumford

3 November, 2021

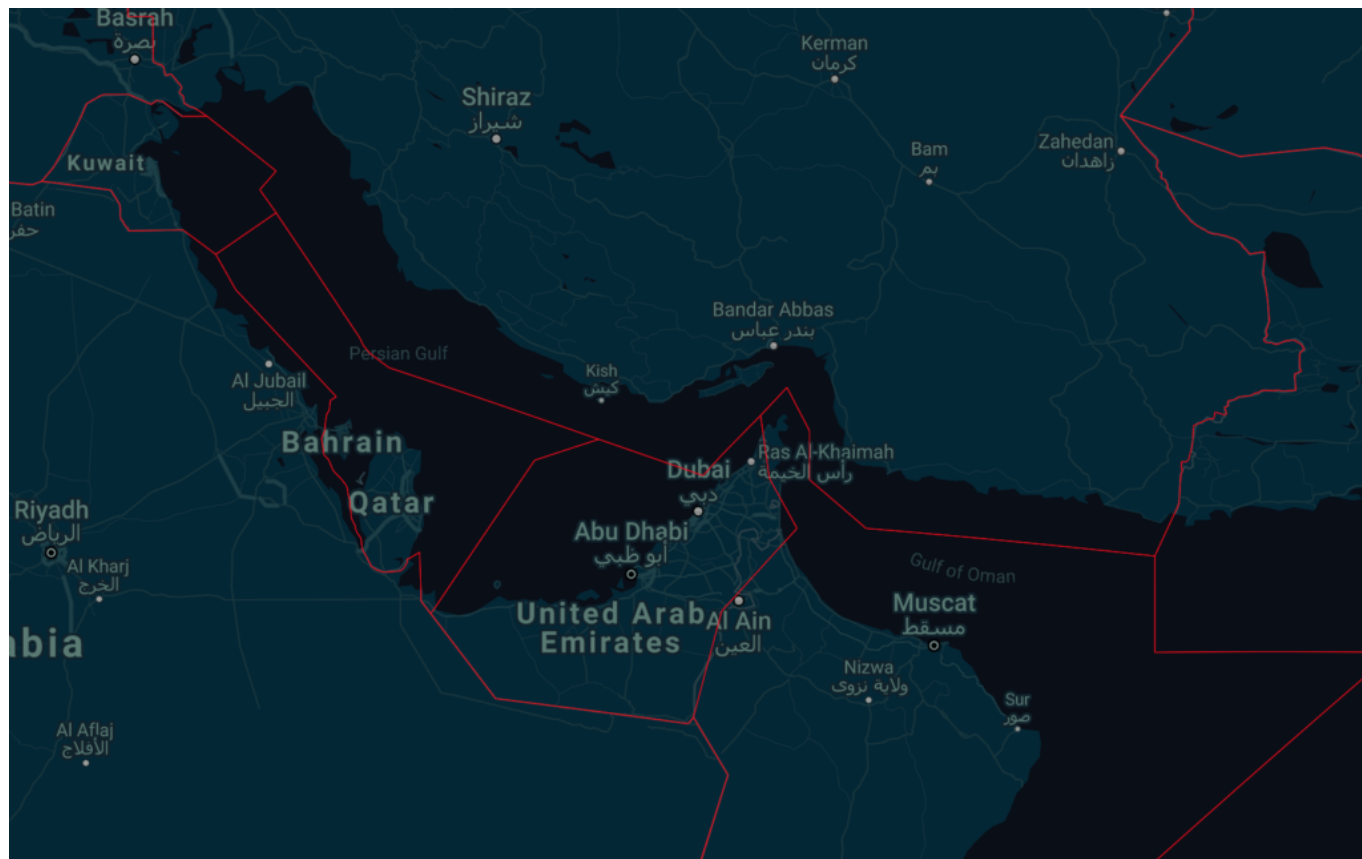


Amid rising tensions between the US and Iran, on 16th May the US FAA issued a new Notam and Background Notice advising operators to exercise caution in the overwater airspace above the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

The US has deployed warships and planes to the region, and withdrawn embassy staff from Iraq in recent days, and Iran has allegedly placed missiles on boats in the Persian Gulf.

In their Background Notice, the US FAA say that **“Iran has publicly made threats to US military**

operations”, and are concerned about “a possible risk of miscalculation or misidentification, especially during periods of heightened political tension and rhetoric.” They also warn of increased GPS jamming by Iran throughout this region.



The US published another airspace warning for Iran back in September 2018, but that was mainly focussed on the risks of overflying Iran itself due to missiles fired from sites in the far west of the country against targets in Syria. That warning only made passing reference to the Gulf region – the only tangible risk at that time being due to Iran’s “test launches” in the area between Iran and Dubai, where the Iranian military regularly fire missiles during drills to practise blockading the Strait of Hormuz.

In May 2018, the US pulled-out of the Iran nuclear deal, and re-imposed sanctions. Since then, the relationship between the two countries has rapidly gone downhill. This week, the White House Press Secretary said that Washington would continue its “maximum pressure” campaign on Iran, adding the US would like to see “behavioural change” from the country’s leadership.

With the military build-up in the Gulf region, the US government has been quick to defend its actions, but the message seems to be clear: **we don’t want war, but we’re ready for one.**

As National Security Adviser John Bolton said in a statement this week: **“The United States is not seeking war with the Iranian regime... but we are fully prepared to respond to any attack, whether by proxy, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or regular Iranian forces.”**

The full FAA Notam and Background Notice text is below. SafeAirspace.net is now updated with the new information.

### **KICZ NOTAM A0015/19**

SECURITY..UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ADVISORY FOR OVERWATER AIRSPACE ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN.

THOSE PERSONS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH A BELOW SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN OPERATING IN OVERWATER AIRSPACE ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF AND THE GULF OF OMAN DUE TO HEIGHTENED MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND INCREASED POLITICAL TENSIONS IN THE REGION, WHICH PRESENT AN INCREASING INADVERTENT RISK TO U.S. CIVIL AVIATION OPERATIONS DUE TO THE POTENTIAL FOR MISCALCULATION OR MIS-IDENTIFICATION. ADDITIONALLY, AIRCRAFT OPERATING IN THE ABOVE-NAMED AREA MAY ENCOUNTER INADVERTENT GPS INTERFERENCE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS JAMMING, WHICH COULD OCCUR WITH LITTLE TO NO WARNING.

A. APPLICABILITY. THIS NOTAM APPLIES TO: ALL U.S. AIR CARRIERS AND COMMERCIAL OPERATORS; ALL PERSONS EXERCISING THE PRIVILEGES OF AN AIRMAN CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE FAA, EXCEPT SUCH PERSONS OPERATING U.S.-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT FOR A FOREIGN AIR CARRIER; AND ALL OPERATORS OF AIRCRAFT REGISTERED IN THE UNITED STATES, EXCEPT WHERE THE OPERATOR OF SUCH AIRCRAFT IS A FOREIGN AIR CARRIER.

B. PLANNING. THOSE PERSONS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH A PLANNING TO OPERATE IN THE ABOVE-NAMED AREA MUST REVIEW CURRENT SECURITY/THREAT INFORMATION AND NOTAMS; COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE FAA REGULATIONS, OPERATIONS SPECIFICATIONS, MANAGEMENT SPECIFICATIONS, AND LETTERS OF AUTHORIZATION, INCLUDING UPDATING B450.

C. OPERATIONS. EXERCISE CAUTION DURING FLIGHT OPERATIONS DUE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF INTERRUPTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC DUE TO HEIGHTENED MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND INCREASED POLITICAL TENSIONS IN THE REGION. POTENTIALLY AFFECTED OVERWATER AIRSPACE ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF AND THE GULF OF OMAN INCLUDES PORTIONS OF THE TEHRAN FIR (OIIX), BAGHDAD FIR (ORBB), KUWAIT FIR (OKAC), JEDDAH FIR (OEJD) , BAHRAIN FIR (OB BB), EMIRATES FIR (OMAE), AND MUSCAT FIR (OOMM). THOSE PERSONS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH A MUST REPORT SAFETY AND/OR

SECURITY INCIDENTS TO THE FAA AT +1 202-267-3333.

SFC - UNL,16 MAY 23:11 2019 UNTIL PERM. CREATED: 16 MAY 23:17 2019

### **FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation - For the Overwater Airspace Above the Persian Gulf and Gulf Of Oman Region.**

Due to increased political tensions and heightened military activities in the region, there is an increasing inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operating in overwater airspace above the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. As a result, on 16 May 2019, the FAA issued Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0015/19, advising U.S. civil flight operations to exercise caution when operating in the above area.

Iran has publicly made threats to U.S. military operations in the Gulf region. In addition, Iran possesses a wide variety of anti-aircraft-capable weapons, including surface-to-air missile systems (SAMs), man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) and fighter aircraft that are capable of conducting aircraft interception operations. Some of the anti-aircraft-capable weapons have ranges that encompass key international air routes over the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Additionally, Iran recently conducted a military exercise in the region, demonstrating their unmanned aircraft system (UAS) capabilities. Although Iran likely has no intention to target civil aircraft, the presence of multiple long-range, advanced anti-aircraftcapable weapons in a tense environment poses a possible risk of miscalculation or misidentification, especially during periods of heightened political tension and rhetoric.

There is also the potential for Iran to increase their use of Global Positioning System (GPS) jammers and other communication jamming capabilities, which may affect U.S. civil aviation operating in overwater airspace over the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

The FAA will continue to monitor the risk environment for U.S. civil aviation operating in the region and make adjustments, as necessary, to safeguard U.S. civil aviation.

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## **No change to Iran airspace warning despite new US sanctions**

David Mumford  
3 November, 2021



The US reimposed sanctions against Iran on Nov 5. Despite this, so far there has been no change to the FAA guidance to US operators issued on 9th September 2018: **flights to Iran are not prohibited, but operators should “exercise caution” when flying in Iranian airspace.**

However, with the reimposed sanctions comes a new problem if you’re a US operator: you’re **allowed** to overfly Iran, but you’re **not allowed** to pay for all the things needed to make that happen – things like overflight permits, and nav fees.

The rule is simple: no US person or business can pay for services in countries with sanctions against them (like Iran), unless that person or business has a licence to do so, issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

And you’re not allowed to get an agent to do it for you either; it’s illegal to skirt the OFAC laws by using a 3rd party company (unless, of course, they’ve been approved by OFAC).

So the big question we have now is this: **if you’re planning to overfly Iran, have you figured out the legalities of paying for services?** How are you making that work? Know someone who’s got an OFAC licence for Iran? **Let us know!**

And one other thing to watch out for – operators with US based insurers should double-check their policies, as you may now no longer be covered for flights to Iran, due to the new sanctions. This is worth checking, even if you’re only planning on overflying the Tehran FIR, as any unplanned landing (decompression, medical, engine fire) may force you into Tehran or another airport – it’s a big chunk of airspace.

#### **Further reading:**

- SafeAirspace page for Iran. SafeAirspace provides a current picture of International Airspace, so that you as the Aircraft Operator can make sound decisions on which routes to fly and which to avoid.
- Our break-down of the US guidance on Iran overflight risk
- What the sanctions mean to non-US operators



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# ORER and ORSU: Closed to International Ops

Declan Selleck  
3 November, 2021



**The Iraqi CAA will ban all international flights to/from ORER/Erbil and ORSU/Sulaimaniyah starting from Friday 29th Sep.**

From then on, those airports will only be open for Iraqi carriers and domestic ops.

Tensions around the Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq are rising following a referendum on independence.

The Iraqi govt has demanded that the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) hand over control of its two international airports – ORER and ORSU. Until the KRG comply with this request, the international ban on flights to these airports is set to continue.

At the request of the Iraqi govt, Iran had already closed it's airspace to ORER/ORSU traffic earlier this week, and Turkey was considering implementing the same ban.

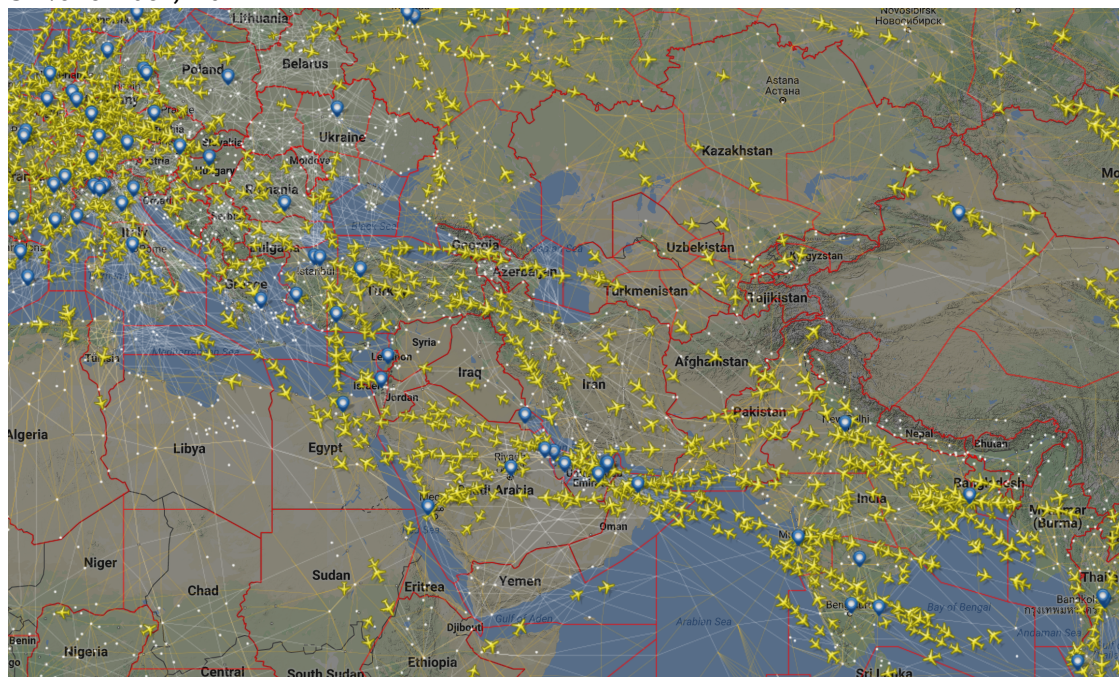
The KRG are now deciding whether to give up control of their airports or lose their international flights. Should it be the latter, then from now on anyone attempting to travel to the region will have to transit via Baghdad.

We will update as more information becomes available.

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# OIIIX Tehran FIR 2017 Operational Changes - Iran

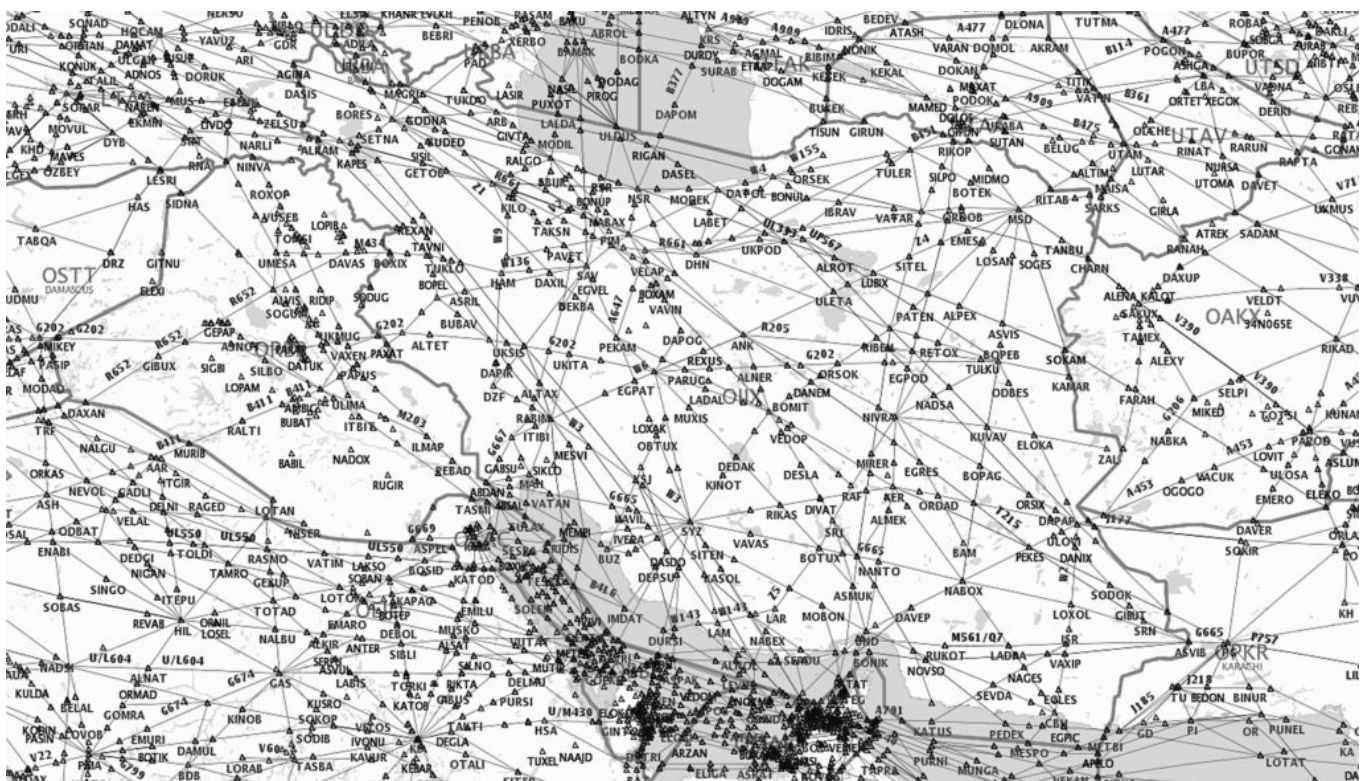
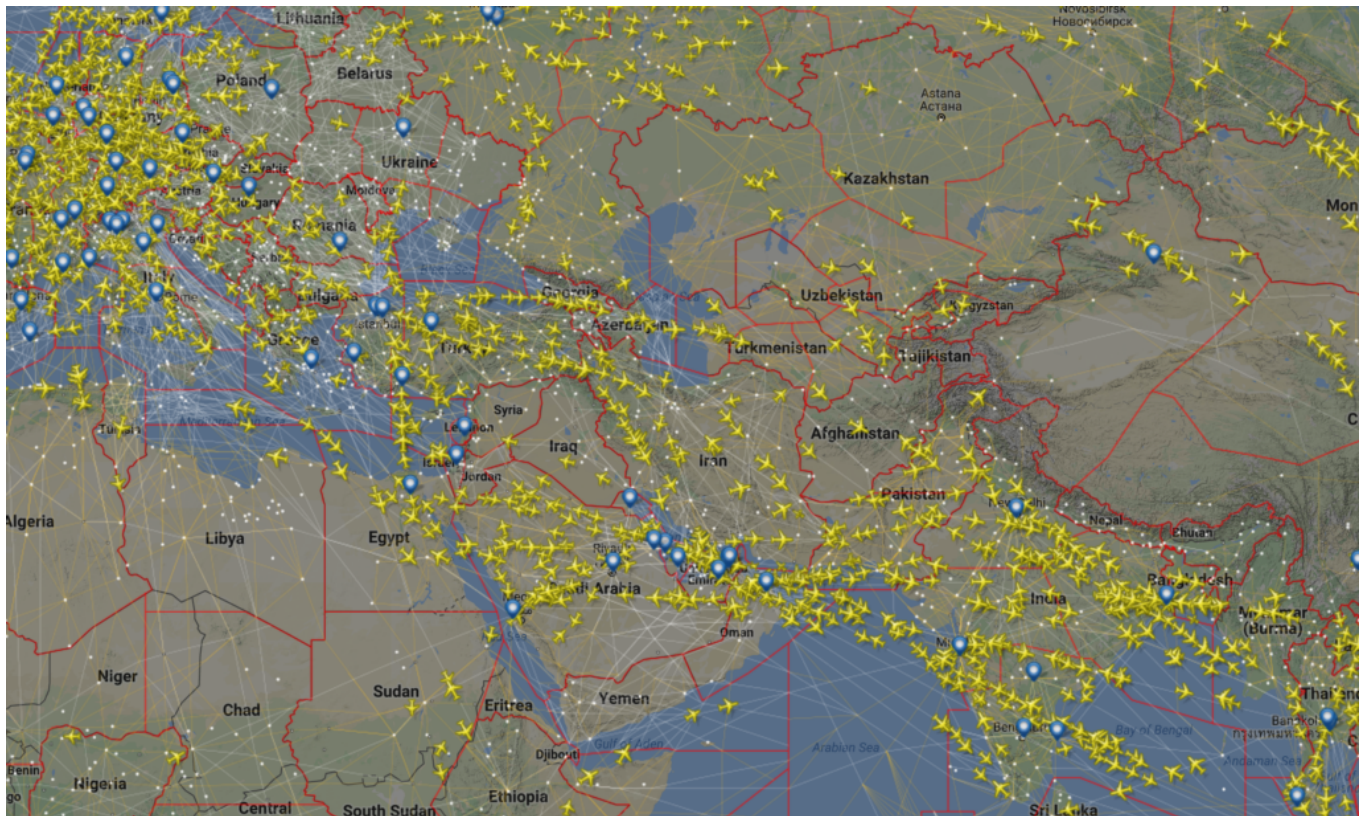
Declan Selleck  
3 November, 2021



**Feb 1st, 2017** Traffic is getting far busier through the **Turkey-Iran FIR boundary** (Europe-Asia main flight route). **ALRAM** is the new “corner” for avoiding Iraq. Here’s updated flight planning guidance from Turkey for Jan-March 2017 – use these when planning your ATC route (refer LTAA A5716/16). We’ve translated the Notam a little for clarity, here’s the highlights:

1. SRT-**ALRAM** segment of UG8 – use FL330 or higher.
2. ULTED-**ALRAM** segment of UT36 – use FL330 or higher.
3. Going via UG8 or UT36, to leave Tehran FIR via **ALRAM**, at FL320 and below: Route EZS-UG81/UL124-VAN-BONAM-UMH. Check Iran AIP Sup 93/15 for more.
4. **ALRAM**-BAYIR segment UT888 minimum FL330. If entering LTAA/Ankara FIR via ALRAM lower than FL330, then route UMH-BONHAM-UI124/UG81-VAN-UI124-UG81-BAYIR.
5. VAN-BONAM segment of UG81 and UI124 can be used bidirectional below FL330.
6. ULTED-NINVA segment of UM688 – use FL330 or higher.
7. Entire R/UR21, SRT-KABAN segment of M/UM860, and ULSAB-KABAN segment of UT334 closed FL180-FL310.
8. UT332 – use FL330 or higher.
9. UT301 totally closed.
10. UT333 closed FL180-FL310 inclusive.





## IOB Bulletins

**31AUG 2016** OIZZ/Iran has approved the use of its airbases by Russian fighter aircraft; Russia has notified intention to launch missiles in the direction of Syria from the Caspian Sea fleet. The Russian Air Force has deployed six Tu-23M3 BACKFIRE bomber aircraft and multiple Su-34 FULLBACK strike fighter jets to



Hamedan Air Base (OIHS/NUJ). FSBI OBXX

**17AUG 2016** On August 16, Russian TU-22 bombers based in Hamedan, Iran, attacked targets in the Syrian towns of Deir Ezzour, Aleppo and Idlib. These were the first Russian airstrikes carried out from bases in Iran.

**07DEC2015** German Authorities published a new Notam last week warning of a risk to flight for aircraft operating in the vicinity of OITT/Tabriz, OITL/Ardabil, and OIGG/Rasht. DFS, the German ATC agency, recommends overflying this general region at FL260 or higher. A6875/15.

**13OCT 2015** On 06 OCT 15 the Russian military launched 26 Kalibr-class cruise missiles from 4 ships in the Caspian Sea at targets in Syria. These missiles were routed through the airspace of Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Syria, causing concern as to the safety of international air traffic crossing the missiles trajectory. Full notice.

More stuff:

- Iran Conflict Zone/Overflight risk warnings at [safeairspace.net](http://safeairspace.net)