

Germany publishes new concerns for Iraq overflights

Mark Zee

6 January, 2020

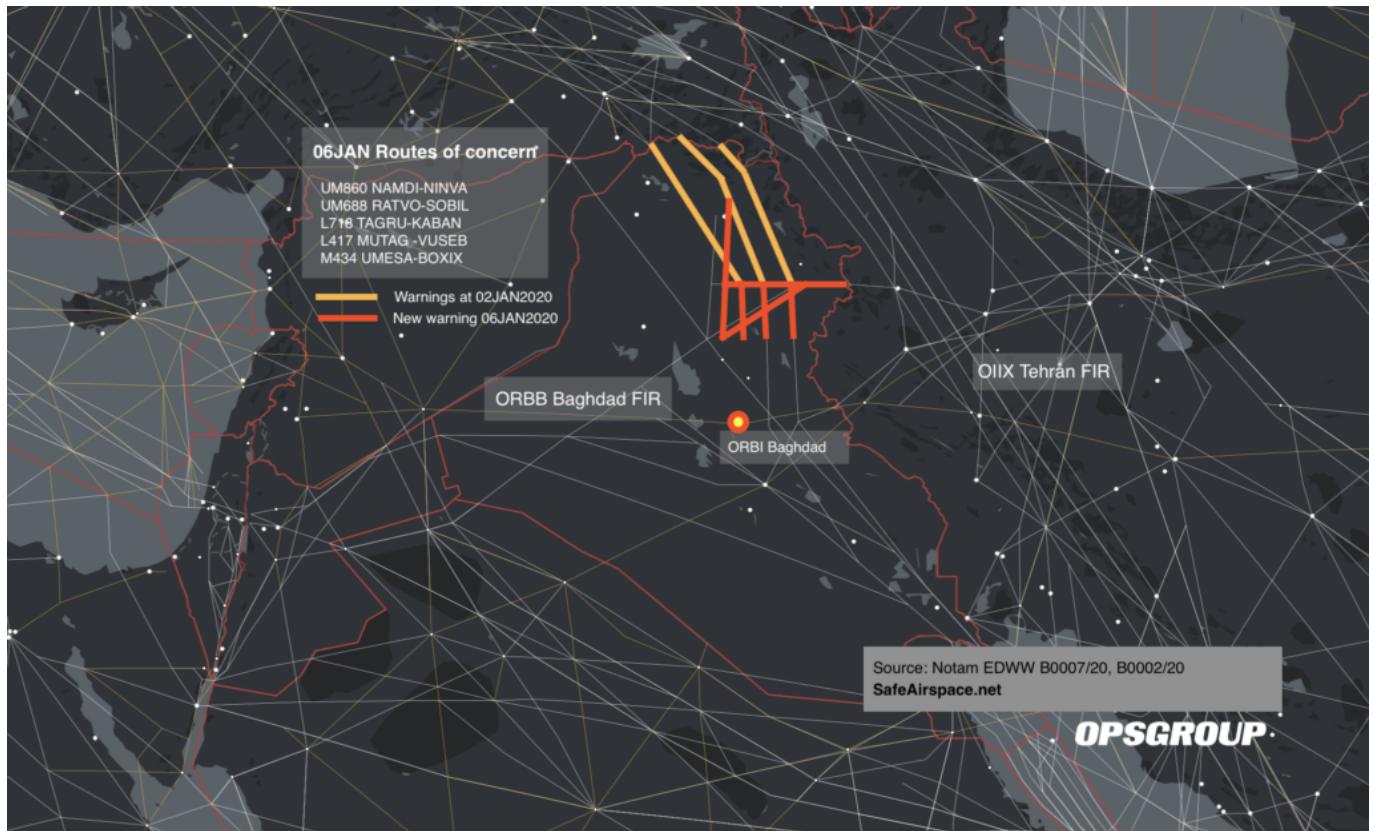


Late Monday evening, the German LBA published a **new warning for Iraq**, indicating areas of concern for overflying traffic, together with a new warning on ORBI/Baghdad Airport.

Notam B0007 of 2020 (issued Jan 6) replaces Notam 0002 (issued on Jan 2nd), and these are the routes that Germany now considers a potential risk for aircraft below FL260:

Airway UM860 NAMDI - NINVA
Airway UM688 RATVO - SOBIL
Airway L718 TAGRU - KABAN
Airway L417 MUTAG - VUSEB
Airway M434 UMESA - BOXIX
Airway R652 MUTAG - DAVAS

Seen on the map below, all these airways are in the north east of Iraq: the yellow lines are the warnings that existed on and prior to Jan 2nd, and the orange lines show the additional areas flagged in Mondays Notam.



Of the other primary states that issue airspace warnings – the UK, France, and the US – none have issued updated guidance yet this year.

There is no doubt that the events of Jan 3, 2019 at ORBI/Baghdad Airport have created an extremely tense situation between the US and Iran. The aviation security picture in the Middle East, already fragile and unstable, is now unpredictable. A response by Iran to the US airstrike of Jan 3rd seems possible.

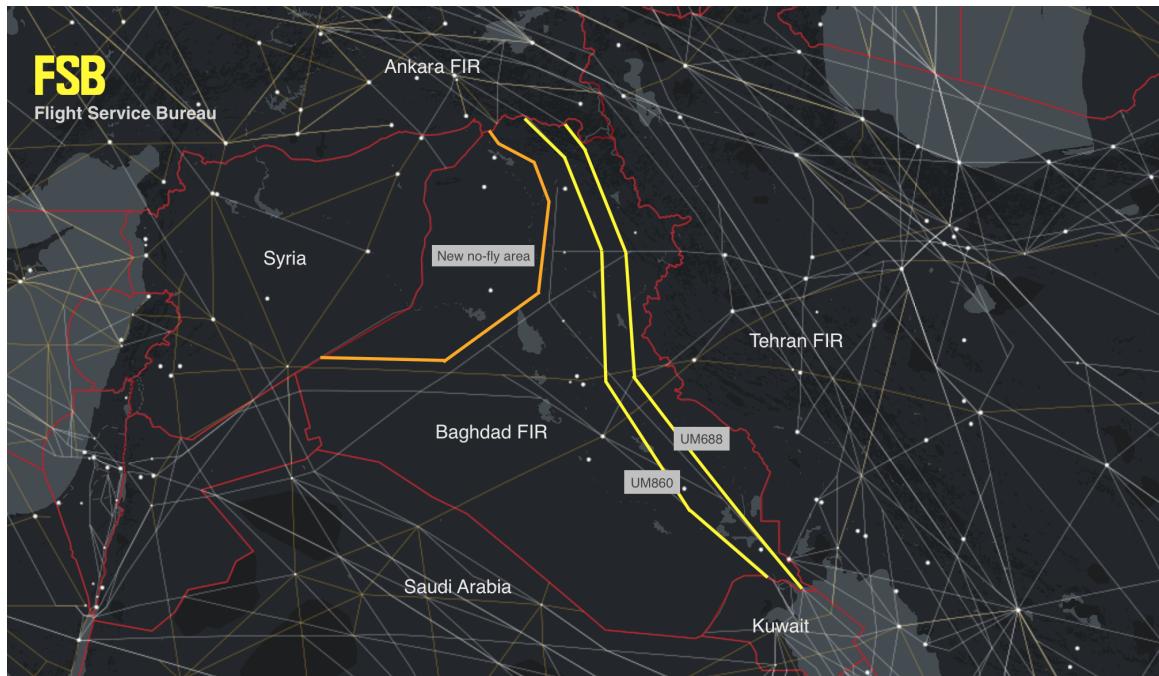
Specific to the Baghdad Airport incident, it seems early reports of Katyusha rockets can be discounted, that it was an attack carried out on vehicles near the airport by US Apache Helicopters. Civil traffic resumed operations shortly after the attack with several departures operating 'as normal'. Overflights continued during the attack.

As to the Iranian response, anything that looks like a US asset or ally could be a target – military or civil. US operators, at a minimum, should be avoiding the Tehran FIR, and considering security carefully when operating in other countries in the region, most notably Israel, Lebanon, and Kuwait – as a response may target airports in those countries or foreign aircraft. That said, it's a guessing game right now, and predicting the specifics of a response is extremely difficult.

For full analysis, and a listing of all current warnings, see **Safe Airspace**.

Iraq Airspace to re-open for overflights

Declan Selleck
6 January, 2020

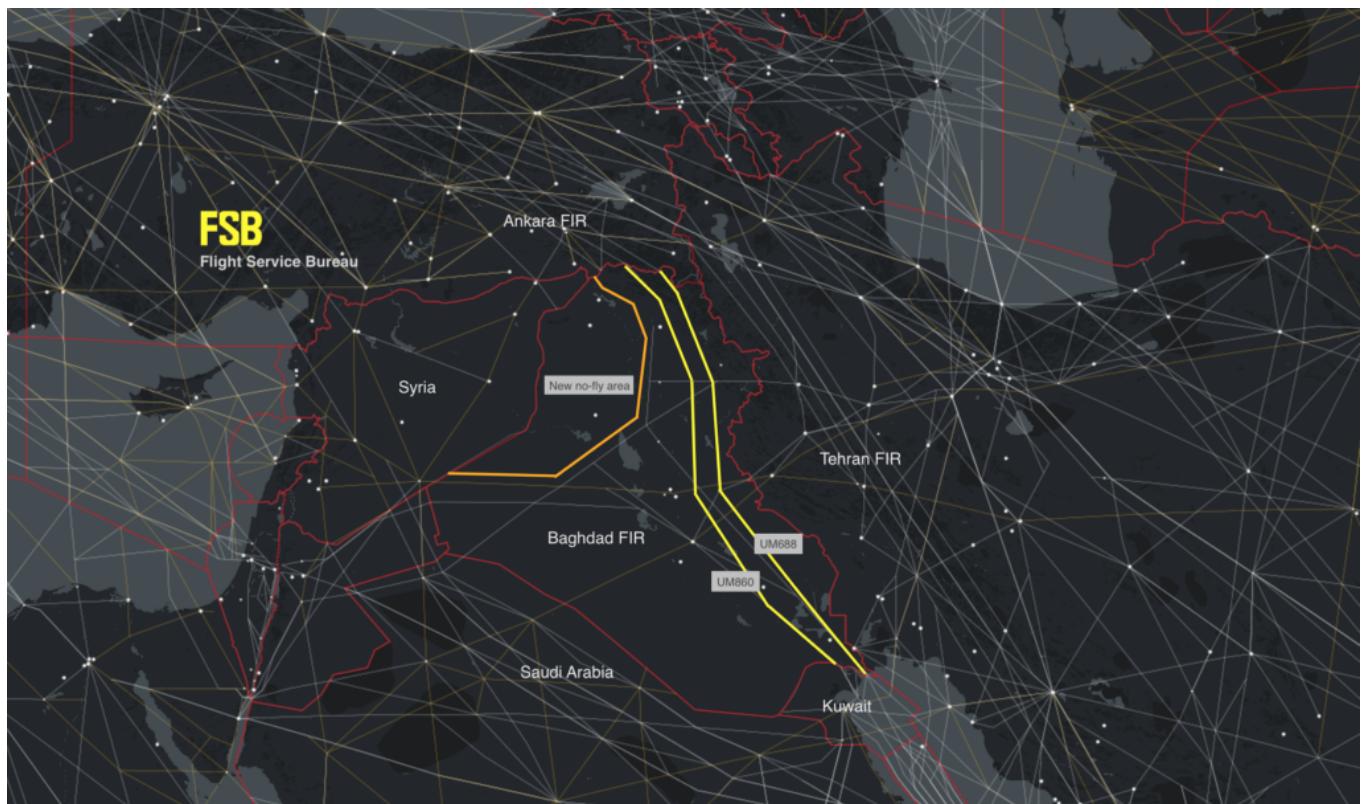


ORBB/Baghdad FIR Overflights of Iraq may be permitted to resume as early as next week, allowing international carriers access again to several previously heavily used routes through the eastern side of the Baghdad FIR.

In May of this year, SFAR 77 – banning US operators from operating within Iraqi airspace – lapsed, and was replaced by Notam KICZ 10/2017 – which had much the same wording.

However, on October 3rd, Iraq issued a new Notam (A0477/17) – with a **new restricted area** in the northwest of the FIR, from Surface to FL460. The previous restricted areas 601 and 701 were withdrawn.

This re-shuffling of restricted airspace paves the way for two major international air routes to be reopened, UM860 and UM688 – which were realigned in April for this purpose, allowing operators additional route options through the Middle East to Europe and vv.



FSB expects an official announcement shortly, and will update operators further. OpsGroup members will be notified directly.