

# We Want to Talk to Lebanon

OPSGROUP Team

3 January, 2023



We want to talk to Lebanon, more specifically, someone in the Lebanese Aviation Authority (the DGCA).

But since they probably won't speak to us, we'll talk to you instead... with a little warning about operating there.

## What is this all about?

It is all about a tradition in Lebanon where **they fire guns about willy nilly**, often into the air, when they celebrate.

They do it at graduations, birthdays, weddings, and even funerals or when a political leader just talks on television (*although that one happens less now because a lot of folk there aren't so happy with the government*).

There was renewed attention from authorities in 2016, but reports of it occurring across Lebanon are still common despite the practice having been outlawed since then.

Reports suggest **OLBA/Beirut airport** sees an average of **7-8 incidents** involving indiscriminate gunfire per year.

New Year's Eve 2022 saw reports that **two MEA A320s** parked at OLBA/Beirut were **damaged by bullets** during the celebrations. A passenger was also almost hit as he left the terminal.

On Nov 10, 2022, a **stray bullet hit a commercial jet on the approach** to OLBA/Beirut.

Two Middle East Airlines Airbus A321neos damaged by bullets fired during the New Year's celebrations while parked at Beirut International Airport. <https://t.co/8VotXyDDIK>  
[pic.twitter.com/Rw2O0f1wwz](https://pic.twitter.com/Rw2O0f1wwz)

— Breaking Aviation News & Videos (@aviationbrk) January 1, 2023

## Why is there no security?

Actually, the reason Beirut airport seems to be at higher risk is as much to do with the fact it is the main international airport, as with the airport's positioning to the city and populated areas.

**OLBA/Beirut's approaches both cross densely populated areas**, and there is little separation between the airport area and land side areas. The final approach to runway 03 also passes over hotels along the coast where celebrations are often held.



## What can you do about it?

Unfortunately, *person-with-gun spotting* on short finals probably isn't an ideal plan. There is **limited mitigation** for this without support of the authorities to improve security and safety.

- If you do spot anything then **report it immediately** to ATC
- **Be aware of the risk**, particularly if operating during holiday periods
- **Do not hold at low level** over populated areas of Lebanon (unlikely you will, but a reminder)
- **Consider climb performance** on departure (get up as quick as possible!)

## Does this happen anywhere else?

**Risk of low level weapons fire is usually associated with conflict zones.** Here are a few, there are no doubt more (*and if you know of any, let us know. We'll add to the list so other operators have a heads-up too.*)

- **OPPS/Peshawar** The airport in Pakistan lies in close proximity to the mountainous region

which borders Afghanistan. The mountains are a known region for rebel groups. Crew are advised not to hold or overfly the area due to the risk of gunfire. More info

- **ORER/Erbil** The Iraqi airport is the main airport for Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan region of Iraq. There is currently ongoing conflict in this region. The approach to Runway 18 / departure from Runway 36 both cross a region of high terrain where there have been multiple reports of gunfire risk. Crew are advised to avoid descending or holding, or crossing this region until they have reached a suitable altitude. More info
- In Sep 2022, a man was hit inside an aircraft flying at 3500', routing to **VYKL/Loikaw airport in Myanmar**. The bullet source was unconfirmed, but linked to conflict between rebel and government groups in the area. More info

Turkey and the Philippines also (sporadically) see a similar tradition occurring.

### **It's not the only threat in Lebanon**

Lebanon has seen a period of **growing instability and unrest** because of political and economic turmoil. Riots and protests are a particular security concern in Beirut.

**Lebanon's relationship with neighbour Israel has had its ups and downs.** Lebanon has not yet followed in the footsteps of other countries in the region to improve ties (and airspace access) with Israel. **Saudi Arabia and the UAE have both entered a 'normalisation' agreement**, also known the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement, which opened up (some possibilities) for using Israel's airspace.

The country also sees increasing **spillover risk from the Syrian conflict**. The conflict often results in **Israeli fighter jets transiting their airspace with no clearance**. It is repeatedly a persistent issue, and raises concerns over airspace risk and safety in the border areas of Lebanon. The Israeli airforce sometimes target Syria from this region resulting in missile **attacks and airstrikes close to OLBA/Beirut**.

**The primary risk** in Lebanon's airspace (the OLBB/Beirut FIR) from the Syrian conflict is that **civil aircraft may be targeted in error**, or caught in crossfire during ongoing air attacks involving Israel, Russia, Iran. Missiles may erroneously lock on to civil aircraft. There is a risk to civil aircraft operating on **airways UL620, UW74, UR18, and UP62**.

Several countries have issued **airspace warnings for Syria**, banning operators from entering the OSTT/Damascus FIR. Many of these warnings include the note that there is a potential risk to aircraft within **200nm of the Damascus FIR which includes the OLBB/Beirut FIR**. There is also risk of GPS interference and communication jamming.

For a full briefing and information on current warnings visit Safeairspace:

- Lebanon
- Syria
- Israel

### **Back to our call to the DGCA**

The risk of indiscriminate gunfire impacting flight operations is a growing concern and the DGCA need to put measures into place to better protect aircraft operating into the country, particularly at OLBA/Beirut International.



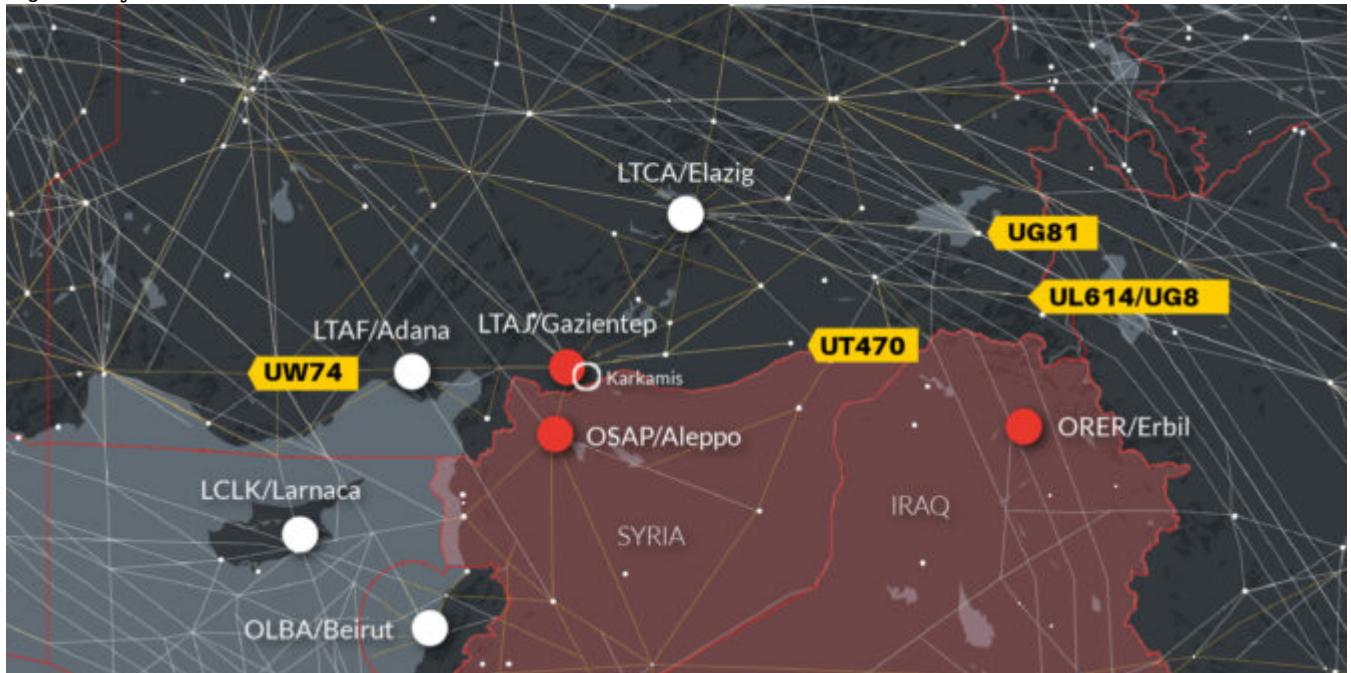
So, here is our call to them to do something.

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# Turkey, Syria and Iraq: Airspace Risk

OPSGROUP Team

3 January, 2023



The airspace risk in Syria and Iraq are both discussed regularly, with numerous warnings and prohibitions from major authorities.

However, Turkey is seeing an increase in security and safety concerns along its **southern border with Syria, and the eastern region which borders Iraq**, because of the conflict and tensions in this region. And not a lot is said about it.

## Why is Turkey seeing increased risk?

*Keeping this as simple and non-political as possible because it is really just for context* – Kurdish people are an ethnic group native to Kurdistan which is a big area spanning southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, northern Iraq and northern Syria.

Here's a map of it:

Turkey has an **ongoing conflict with armed Kurdish groups**, particularly one called the PKK who have fought against Turkish authorities since the 1980's, hoping to establish an independent Kurdish state.

In addition to this, Syria have their own civil war also involving their Kurdish population, as does Iraq. Turkey borders each of these countries, and spillover from these has led to more and more military action by Turkey.

## Risks for aviation:

There are two main risks previously highlighted:



## 1. Misidentification and anti-aircraft weaponry

**The primary risk is misidentification** by local militia who infrequently target Turkish military aircraft with MANPADS and weaponsed drones. Operations to LTAJ/Gaziantep should be carefully reviewed given its proximity to the Syrian border.

The US FAA published a note on Turkey in 19 May 2021 referring to the threat from militia with access to anti-aircraft weaponry.

## 2. GPS jamming

**The secondary risk is GPS Jamming.** Turkey has long been an area which sees significant GPS Jamming. There are **frequent reports from crews of GPS signal interference** in Turkish airspace – with some as far away as abeam Baghdad. GPS jamming is common through the LTAA/Ankara FIR, and especially on the border between the ORBB/Baghdad and OIIX/Tehran FIRs.

Turkey Notam LTAA A6691/22, valid through to 6 January 2023 relates to GPS Jamming.

**Other growing risks for air crew and air operations:**

### 1. Security on the ground

**Security in major cities**, and in regions along the border, in southern Turkey is a growing concern. Crew should be aware of these and should avoid travelling close to the border regions.

Caution should be taken if visiting large public spaces and tourist areas as there is a **heightened risk of terrorism**.

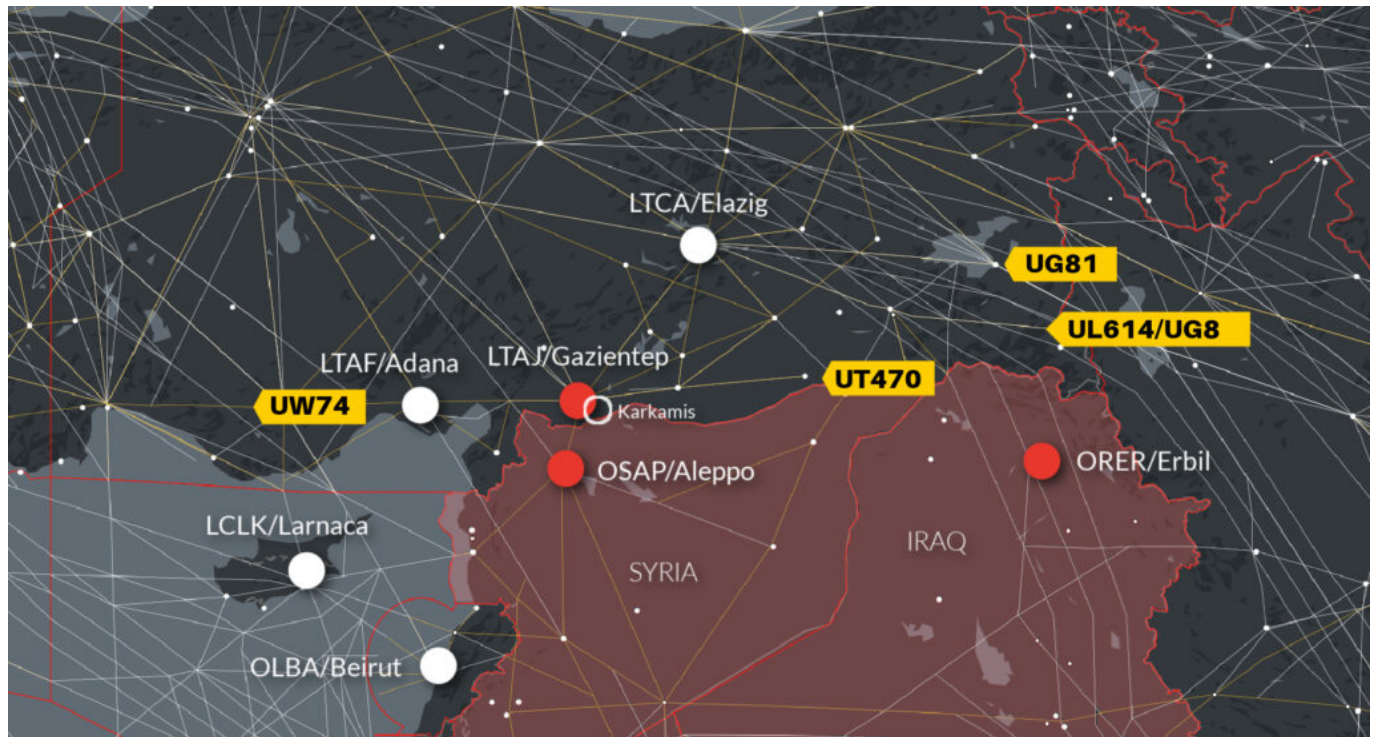
Prepare for **potential disruption and delays due heightened security** in airports.

**Consider the implications of diverting** to airports where you have no ground contacts, engineering or support. There may be political concerns to consider as well depending on the nationality of your crew or passengers.

### 2. Risk in southern Turkish airspace

Along the border with Syria and Iraq in proximity to conflict zones, there is a **higher level of airborne military traffic, UAS and the risk of proximity to airstrikes**.

Most major authorities advise operators to exercise caution when operating in the airspace within **200 NM of the Damascus FIR (OSTT)**, which should be considered to include the southern region of Turkey as well as the countries neighbouring Syria to the west.



## Major events

- On Nov 21, the Turkish border town of Karkamis was hit by **artillery and rockets from across the Syrian border**.
- On Nov 13, a **bomb attack in Istanbul** attributed to the PKK resulted in Turkey carrying out airstrikes against Syria and Iraq. Operation Claw-Sword is reported to have involved **70 aircraft and drones**.
- In May 2021 an attempted drone attack by local militia on LTCC/Diyabakir airport in South Eastern Turkey.
- In Jan 2019, Turkish security forces intercepted three weaponised drones during attempted attacks against sites in southern Turkey.

**A full briefing on Turkey** can be found on [Safeairspace.net](https://www.safeairspace.net)

## Syria

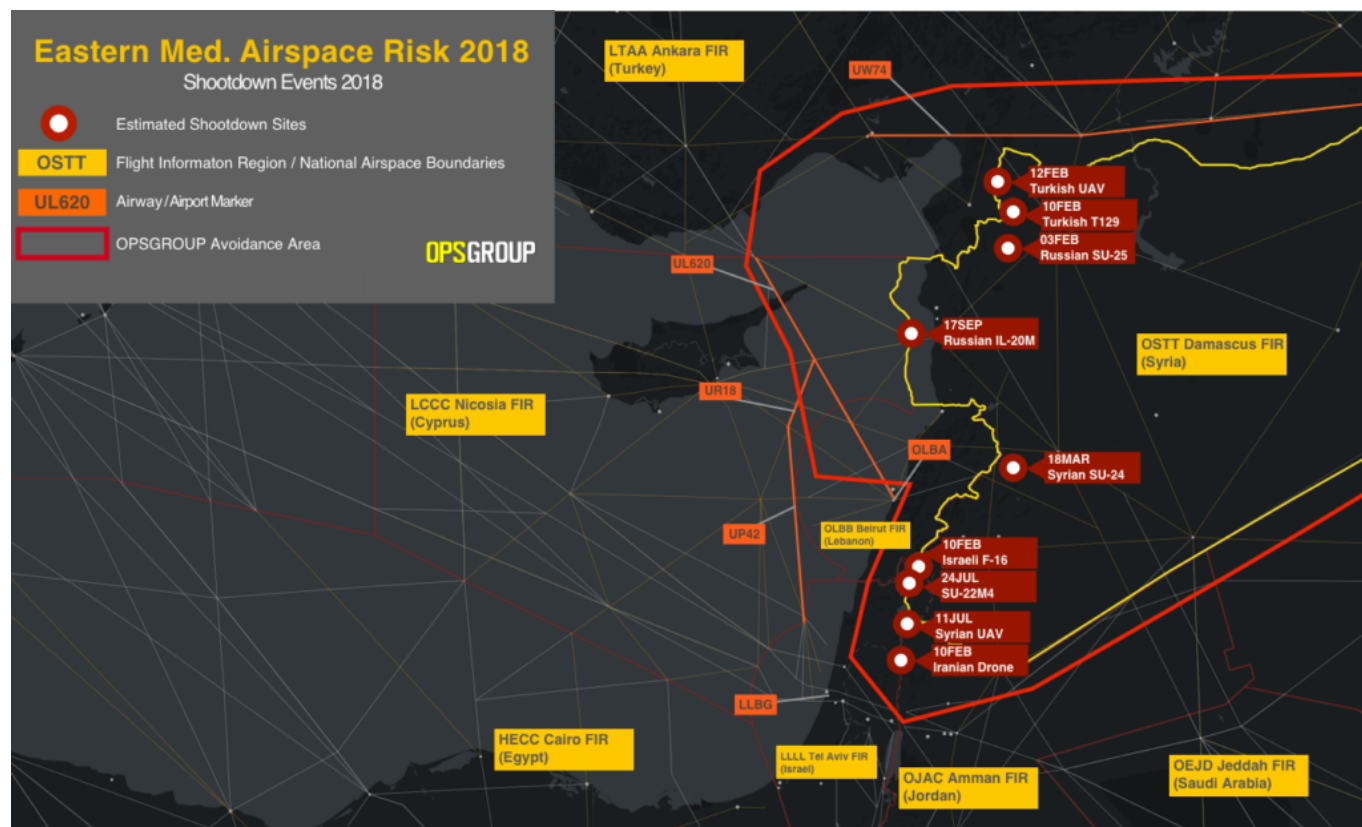
**There is a high risk to civil aircraft.** Syrian airspace (OSTT/Damascus FIR) should be avoided entirely. Airspace adjoining the Damascus FIR is also at risk: Cyprus, Turkey, Israel. Total flight ban for US, UK and German operators, and several other countries have issued warnings to avoid the airspace of Syria.

**The primary risk** is a misidentification by Syrian air defense systems. Civil aircraft may be targeted in error, or caught in crossfire during ongoing air attacks involving Israel, Russia, Iran. Missiles may erroneously lock on to civil aircraft. Israeli airstrikes on Syria are regular, and do not show any regard for civil traffic.

**There is a clear risk to civil aircraft operating on airways UL620, UW74, UR18, and UP62.**

The FAA information on Syria warns the threat is extended to adjacent FIRs in the Eastern Mediterranean region including the LLLL/Tel Aviv, OJAC/Amman, OLBB/Beirut and LCCC/Nicosia FIRs. Use caution if operating in the area.

A full briefing on Syria can be read [here](#).



## Iraq

Most major authorities **advise against operations below FL320 in the ORBB/Baghdad FIR**. The US FAA amended their KICZ Notam from prohibiting all operations, to this in October 2021.

In Sep 2022, Iran closed a section of airspace in the north of the country along the border with Iraq, and is using the area to launch missile and drone attacks at targets near ORER/Erbil Airport. Iran are warning their own operators against flying in Iraqi airspace.

**ORER/Erbil is the primary airport** located in the Iraqi Kurdistan region and regular artillery, rocket and missile attacks target this region. Operations into the airports including diversions, should be avoided.

A full briefing on Iraq can be read [here](#).

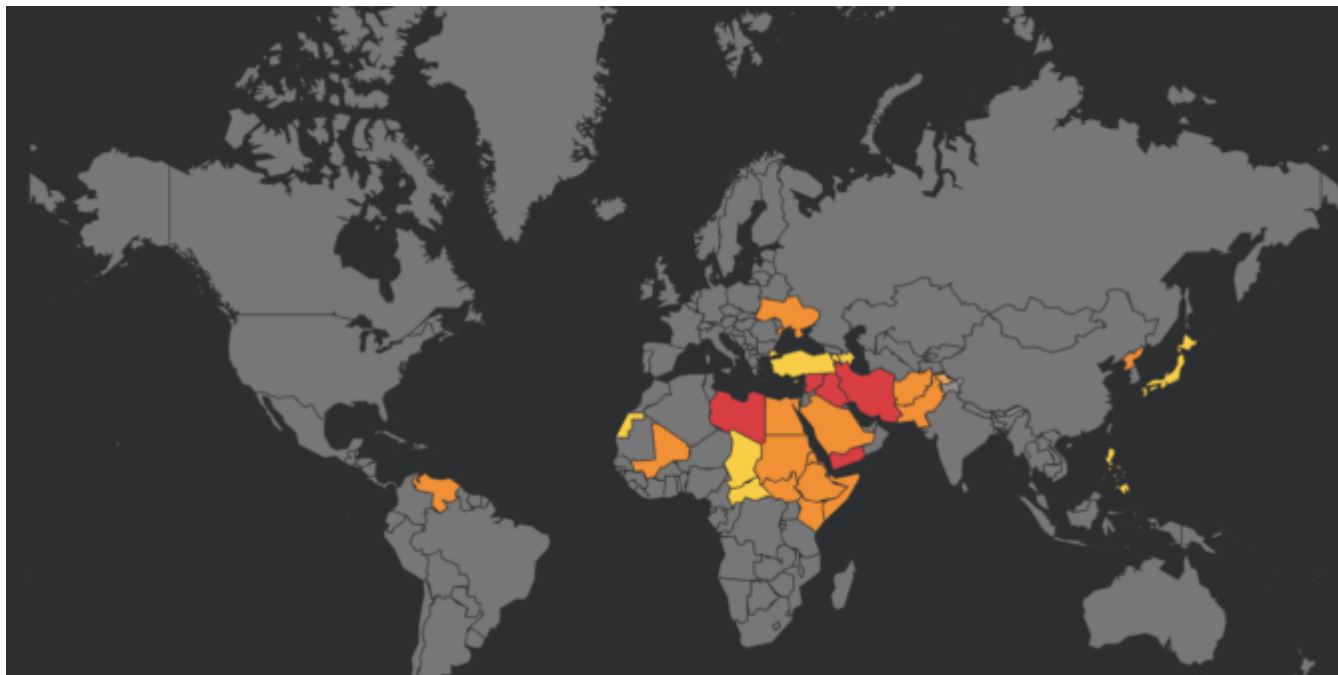
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## SafeAirspace: 2021 Update

Chris Shieff

3 January, 2023





2020 was a heck of a ride. But therein lies the risk – **what else might you have missed amongst all the Covid-related noise?** Sadly, conflicts and their risks to civil aviation have not taken a break during the pandemic.

As it's a new year, we thought **a summary of Airspace Risk** was called for. Here's what's making headlines at the moment:

### **Saudi Arabia & Yemen**

Houthi rebels in Yemen are regularly firing **explosive drones and rockets** across the border into Saudi Arabia, and these usually target airports in the south such as **OEAH/Abha** and **OEGN/Jizan**. Their latest attack was on **OYAA/Aden** airport in late December which resulted in mass casualties.

Saudi Arabia continues to retaliate with airstrikes. The latest was in the capital **Sanaa** just weeks ago, where multiple munitions landed near the airport.

The risk to aviation is that **overflying aircraft may get caught in the crossfire** or might be **misidentified by Saudi air defences**. Active terrorist groups in Yemen may also use anti-aircraft weaponry to target foreign interests.

The FAA prohibit all US operators from entering most of the OYSC/Sanaa FIR at any level. Only two airways are allowed, and they are well off the coast – **UT702** and **M999**.

There are no restrictions on Saudi Arabia but **use caution in the southern regions**. France and Germany have issued their own warnings.

*SafeAirspace **Yemen** page – [click here](#).*

*SafeAirspace **Saudi Arabia** page – [click here](#).*

### **Iraq**

**Rocket attacks** on military interests at airports have become a common occurrence. They are generally fired by local militia without warning. **ORBI/Baghdad** is frequently targeted, along with other airports including **ORER/Erbil**. There is a clear risk to aircraft at low levels.

US relations were further strained through 2020 with multiple attacks on the US embassy in Baghdad. The

tensions escalated to a point where the US considering closing it.

Foreign aircraft continue to be at risk from **armed militia who have access to portable anti-aircraft weaponry**, while **misidentification by the air defence systems** of multiple foreign forces in the country is also possible.

The FAA has extended its ban on US operators entering the Baghdad FIR **at any level**. Even though the SFAR says you can enter above FL320, the long-running Notam KICZ A0036/30 says otherwise.

*SafeAirspace **Iraq** page – [click here](#).*

## Syria

There have been several recent **Israeli airstrikes on targets throughout Syria**. In late December there are reports that Israeli fighters transited Lebanese airspace at low level causing alarm in Beirut before attacking targets in Western Syria. Just weeks ago, several sites around Damascus were targeted by Israeli missiles.

The primary risk is that aircraft may be **misidentified by Syrian air defence systems** which are regularly activated. Civil operators may get **caught in the crossfire** as missiles may erroneously lock on to the wrong aircraft.

The FAA are taking no chances – the ban on US operators entering the OSTT/Damascus FIR at any level has been extended a full three years to 2023.

*SafeAirspace **Syria** page – [click here](#).*

## South Sudan

Just this week ICAO issued a concerning warning about the risk to aircraft operating below FL245 in the **HSSX/Khartoum FIR over South Sudan**, or flying in and out of **HSSJ/Juba**. They are ‘gravely’ concerned about ATC disruptions, a lack of contingencies, inadequate training of controllers, limited info about equipment outages and a lack of co-ordination with other ATS units.

*SafeAirspace **South Sudan** page – [click here](#).*

## Emerging Conflict Zones

2020 saw **three new conflict zones** emerge, here is what is happening with them now.

### Ethiopia

A civil conflict erupted in October last year in the **Tigray region of Northern Ethiopia**. The government went to war with the TPLF – a regional force seeking independence.

The region’s airports were closed and TPLF showed an intent to internationalise the conflict by attacking aviation interests. They fired rockets into Eritrea targeting **HHAS/Asmara**, and also attacked multiple airports to the South of the Tigray region.

**Two airways were closed** (T124, and M308) with **no explanation of the risk**. Other airways remained open but uncomfortably close to the fight – especially UG300, UN321 and UL432. **No airspace warnings** were issued despite the dangers.

### What’s the latest?

In late November Ethiopian forces captured the region’s capital **Mekelle** and regained control. Remaining

TPLF forces have retreated leaving behind a humanitarian disaster and a vow to continue the fight. Since then, the **airway closures have been removed** and things have gone quiet, **but an airspace risk remains** – armed militia continue to be active in Northern regions and may be looking to make a statement. **Be wary of operating in the area.**

## Western Sahara

Late last year the region's independence movement (the Polisario) declared war on Morocco for breaching a ceasefire agreement. The FAA published a warning that the Polisario **might have access to anti-aircraft weaponry** left over from previous conflicts.

### *What's the latest?*

It is still an **active conflict zone**. The fight has reached the international stage after the US declared their support for Morocco. The Polisario have indicated they are willing to at least talk, but so far have not put down their weapons. So, it is a wait-and-see type deal.

The risk to overflying aircraft remains. The GCCC/Canarias FIR keep extending a Notam advising operators to **not fly below FL200** on the following airways: **UY601, UN728 and UT975**. However, the reason is still missing: because of the **risk of anti-aircraft fire**. The G000/Dakar FIR haven't issued any warnings despite the threat. Take care if operating in the area.

## Armenia-Azerbaijan

In September last year, an ethnic conflict erupted over a disputed territory in Western Azerbaijan – **Nagorno-Karabakh**. The fight was between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

As a major air corridor for en-route traffic, there were **significant flight disruptions**. Azerbaijan swiftly closed all but one west/eastbound airway and routed traffic via Georgia. Armenia asked aircraft to take extra fuel and expect re-routes. The conflict was short but intense, with heavy artillery fire from both sides. The conflict eventually spread beyond the contested regions with longer range weapons. The entire border region posed a **risk for civil aircraft**.

### *What's the latest?*

For once the news is good. In November a ceasefire agreement was signed with the help of Russia. Armenia effectively lost and withdrew from the region and **the conflict was officially over**. Armenia removed its airspace warning, while Azerbaijan re-opened the affected airways and a large section of airspace near the border.

With the conflict now over, and no new reports of significant fighting since the peace agreement in November, direct crossing traffic between the two countries is now technically possible again. However, **most East-West flights are currently still electing to go further north** instead, connecting between Azerbaijan and Georgia's airspace, avoiding Armenia.

## What about Safeairspace.net?

Our conflict zone and risk database is **updated constantly**. We assess risk with official sources and build a simple picture for you of those need-to-know places.

There are currently 5 regions which are assessed as a **Level 1 Risk - No Fly**. These are: **Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Libya, and Syria**.

Head over to SafeAirspace.net and take a look. With a single click you can download a **risk briefing** of the entire world in just a few pages of nice simple English.



The mission of SafeAirspace is this: to provide a single, independent, and eternally free resource for all airspace risk warnings, so that airlines and aircraft operators can easily see the current risk picture for unfamiliar airspace. If you know of a risk not listed on the site, or you have anything else to add, please get in touch with us at [news@ops.group](mailto:news@ops.group)

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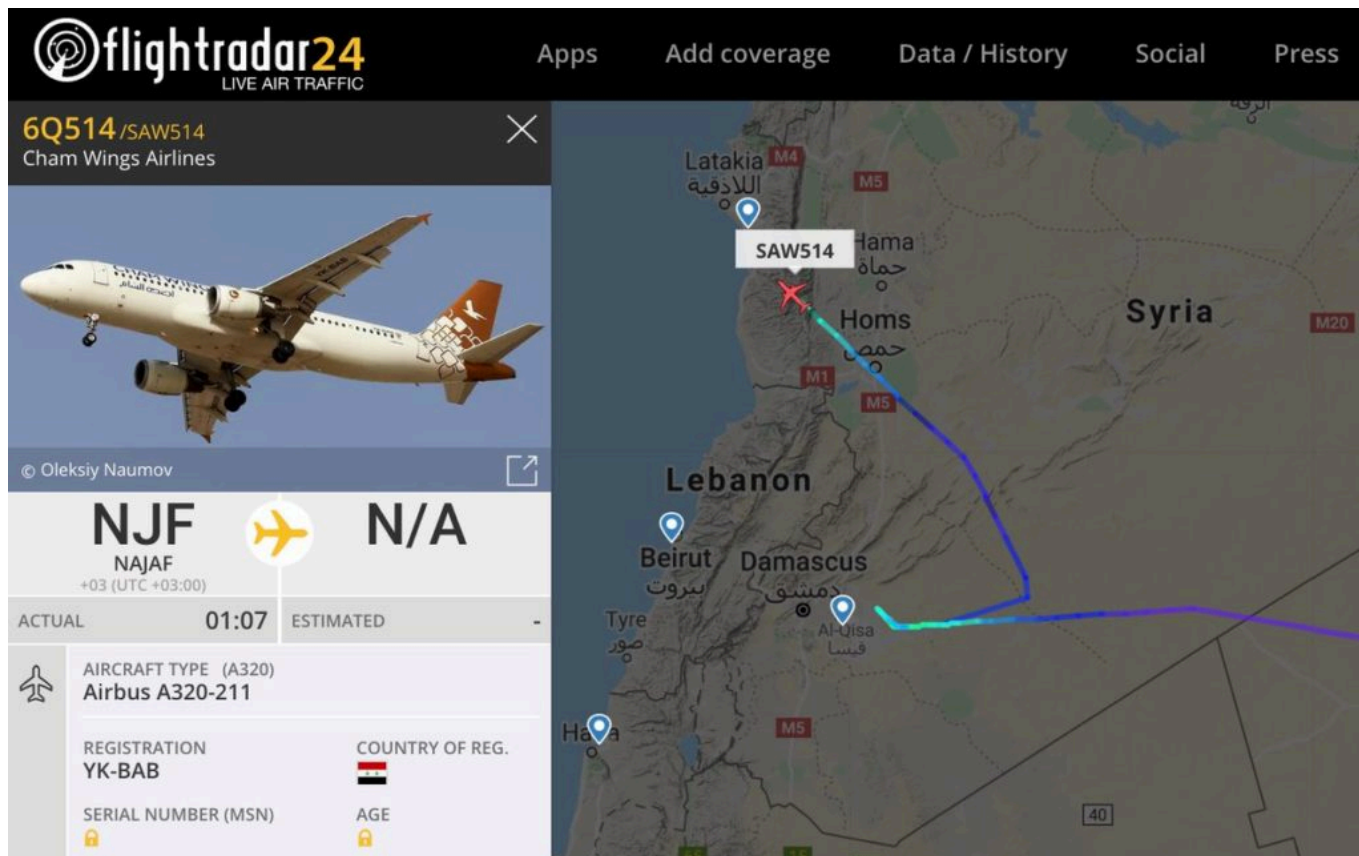
# Passenger plane almost shot down over Syria

David Mumford  
3 January, 2023



In the early hours of Feb 6, a commercial flight en-route to Damascus was **forced to divert** to Russia-controlled Khmeimim air base after **coming under fire from Syrian air defences**.

The Cham Wings A320, with 172 people on board, was flying from ORNI/Najaf to OSDI/Damascus when the incident took place. According to The New York Times, Syrian air defences directed **anti-aircraft gun and missile fire** against the Airbus, but failed to hit the aircraft.



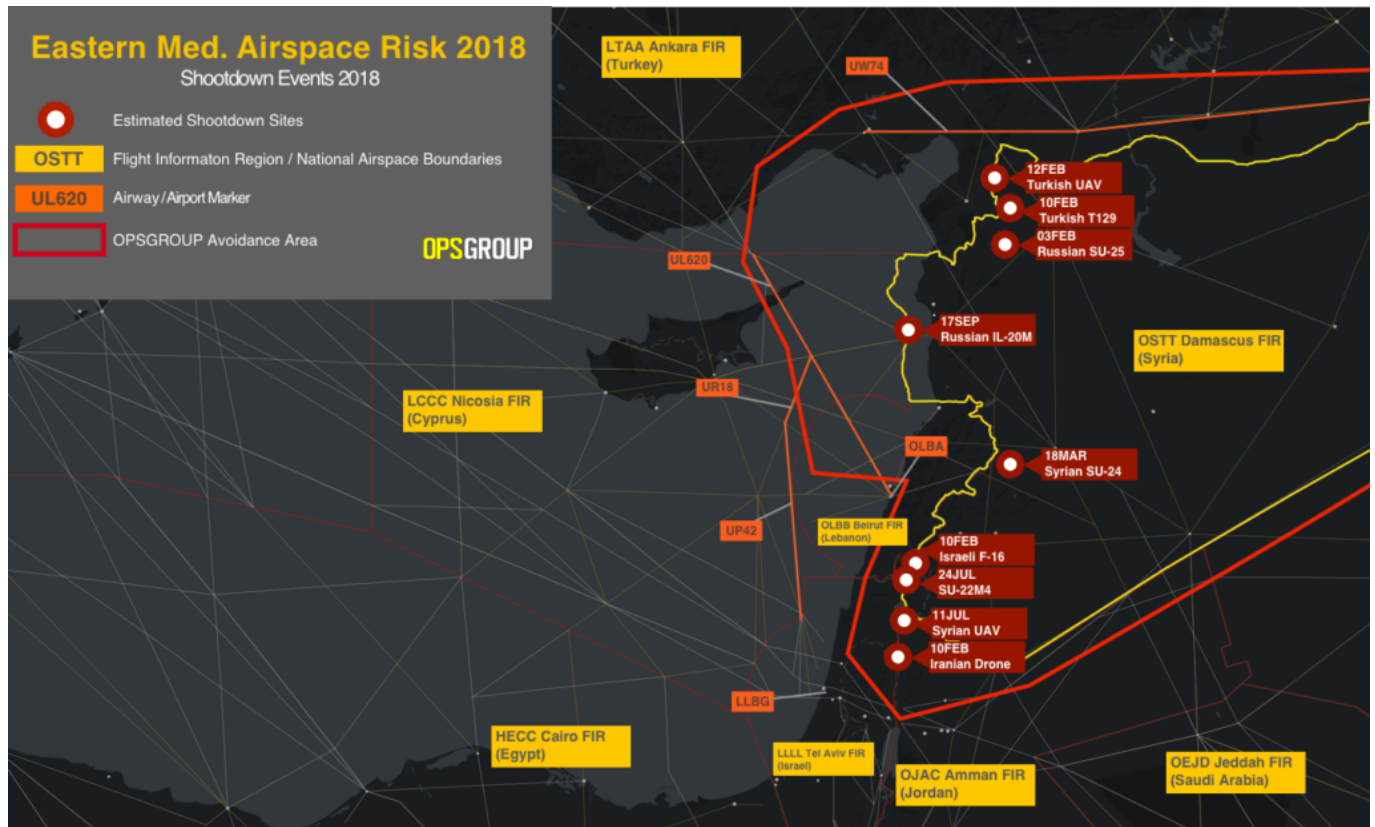
Russia's Ministry of Defense has since **blamed Israel for the near-miss** - at the time the incident occurred, the Syrian air defence systems had engaged four Israeli F-16s, and Russia claims that these fighter jets were using civilian aircraft as "cover" while conducting air strikes.

Russia has accused the Israeli military of **putting commercial flights like this at risk** in the past, by timing their airstrikes on Syria too close to flights arriving at Beirut and Damascus airports. In the past few months there have been a number of air strikes by Israel against military targets in Syria, including OSDI/Damascus airport, with the Syrian government firing its own missiles over Syrian airspace and along the Lebanese border to repel the attacks.

This latest incident comes just a month after a Ukraine International Airlines passenger plane was **shot down shortly after take-off from Tehran**, killing all 176 people on board. Iran later said its forces had shot it down unintentionally, having mistaken the aircraft radar return for an inbound missile to Tehran.

In the days following, many countries issued warnings to **avoid the airspace of Iran and Iraq**, and most airlines other than Middle Eastern carriers have now stopped overflying these countries entirely.

The same is true of Syria - there are multiple airspace warnings in place, including a **total flight ban** by the US and German authorities. Some countries add the additional warning to **exercise caution when operating anywhere within 200 nautical miles of the country** - advice that came into sharp focus in September 2018, when Syrian forces **shot down** a Russian IL-20M transport category aircraft over international waters 20nm off the coast, mistaking it for an Israeli fighter.



That event significantly changed the risk picture for civil aircraft operating in the vicinity of Syria. We wrote about it here, and the advice still stands – there is a **clear risk to civil aircraft operating over Syria, as well as in the overwater airspace east of Cyprus**. The risk picture is two-fold: **misidentification** of your aircraft as a military one, and an **errant missile** launched at another aircraft that locks onto you instead.

### Further reading:

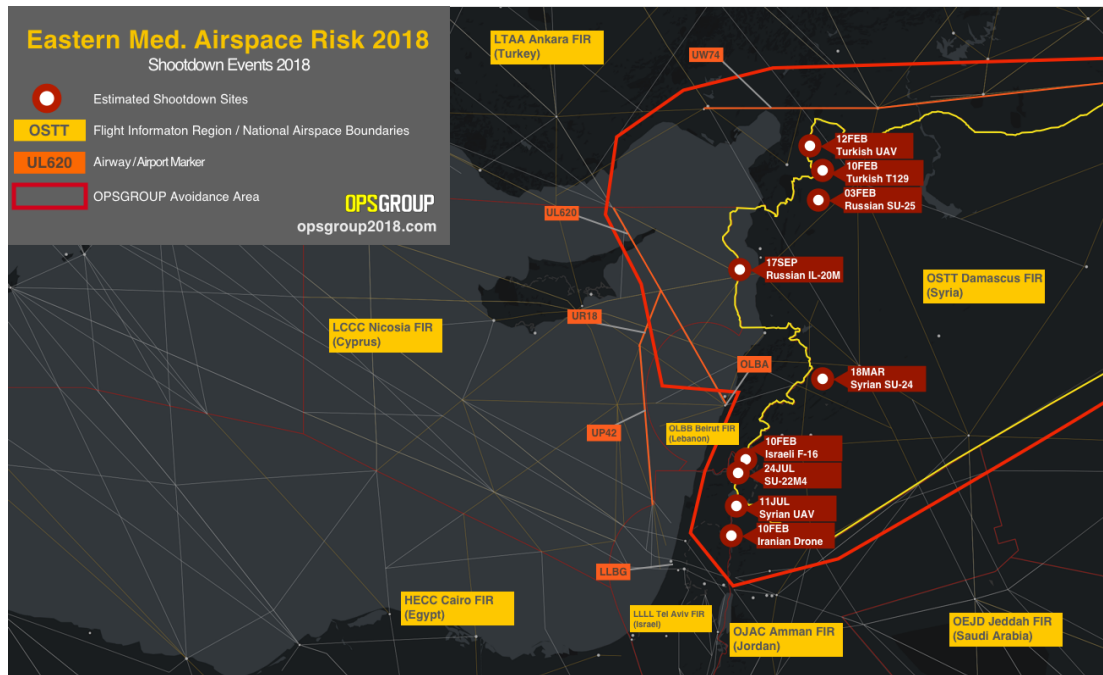
*Safeairspace - Managed by OpsGroup, this is our public repository and first point of warning for Airspace Risk for airlines, pilots, dispatchers, and aircraft operators.*

Why are we still flying airline passengers over war zones? - OpsGroup article from Sept 2018, following the shoot-down of the Russian IL-20M off the coast of Syria, with a new note to members on the airspace risk in the Eastern Mediterranean.

# Why are we still flying airline passengers over war zones?

Mark Zee  
3 January, 2023





Here's the level of inconsistency we've reached in international air transport: we take each passenger, scrutinize their booking, check the no-fly-list, watch them on CCTV, pull them apart at TSA, remove anything sharper than a pen, question them, x-ray the bags, run Explosive Trace Detection tests, screen the hold baggage, background check every member of the crew, and then, once they've all boarded, **fly this ultra-secure airplane straight into a war zone.**

Welcome to the Eastern Mediterranean. It's an active conflict zone. The Russian naval build up there this month is the largest since Moscow's intervention in Syria began in 2015. Over Syria, 9 aircraft have been shot down this year.

**The most recent was on Monday night this week**, when Syria came under attack from Israel fighter jets, and started firing indiscriminately at anything off the coast that looked like a threat. They wanted to shoot something down, and they did—except it was a friend, not foe. They took out a Russian Ilyushin IL-20M transport category airplane. Even on the worst radar, that doesn't look anything like an Israeli F-16.

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.

And yet, most airlines continue to operate. Are we really so comfortable with operating in conflict zones again?

**The lessons of MH17 seem to be fading fast.** It's a little over four years since 298 people lost their lives over Ukraine one summer afternoon, thanks to an errant missile fired during a civil war at an aircraft that they thought was a military threat. "Why were they over a war zone", everyone cried afterwards.

Well, we all were. Me too. I was a pilot for Austrian Airlines at the time. I recall one morning in Vienna, some months before MH17. Boarding the last of the passengers, my BBC news app flashed up a story about a helicopter being shot down in eastern Ukraine .

## Ukraine army helicopter shot down near Sloviansk, 12 dead

🕒 29 May 2014 | [Europe](#)

[Share](#)



**Pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine have shot down a military helicopter near Sloviansk, killing 12 people, the Ukrainian military says.**

It says the rebels used a Russian-made anti-aircraft system, and that an army general was among the dead.

The town of Sloviansk, Donetsk region, has seen

### Ukraine crisis

**Witnessing clashes outside Kiev parliament**

**Life on street dividing Ukraine and Russia**

**Putin shows who is boss**

As we were headed east, with my colleague in the cockpit, we quickly plotted the position on our enroute chart, and noted that it was really close to our route. Maybe 30 miles north. “We might see something interesting!”, we said, and pushed back. We didn’t, nor did we think much more about it.

Do you see the thought process though? Before MH17, we didn’t consider the risks to our aircraft from war zones. Especially being so high. Helicopters might be getting shot down, but we’re at 35,000 feet. No problem.

This is why all of these airlines—mine, at the time, included—operated on the route.

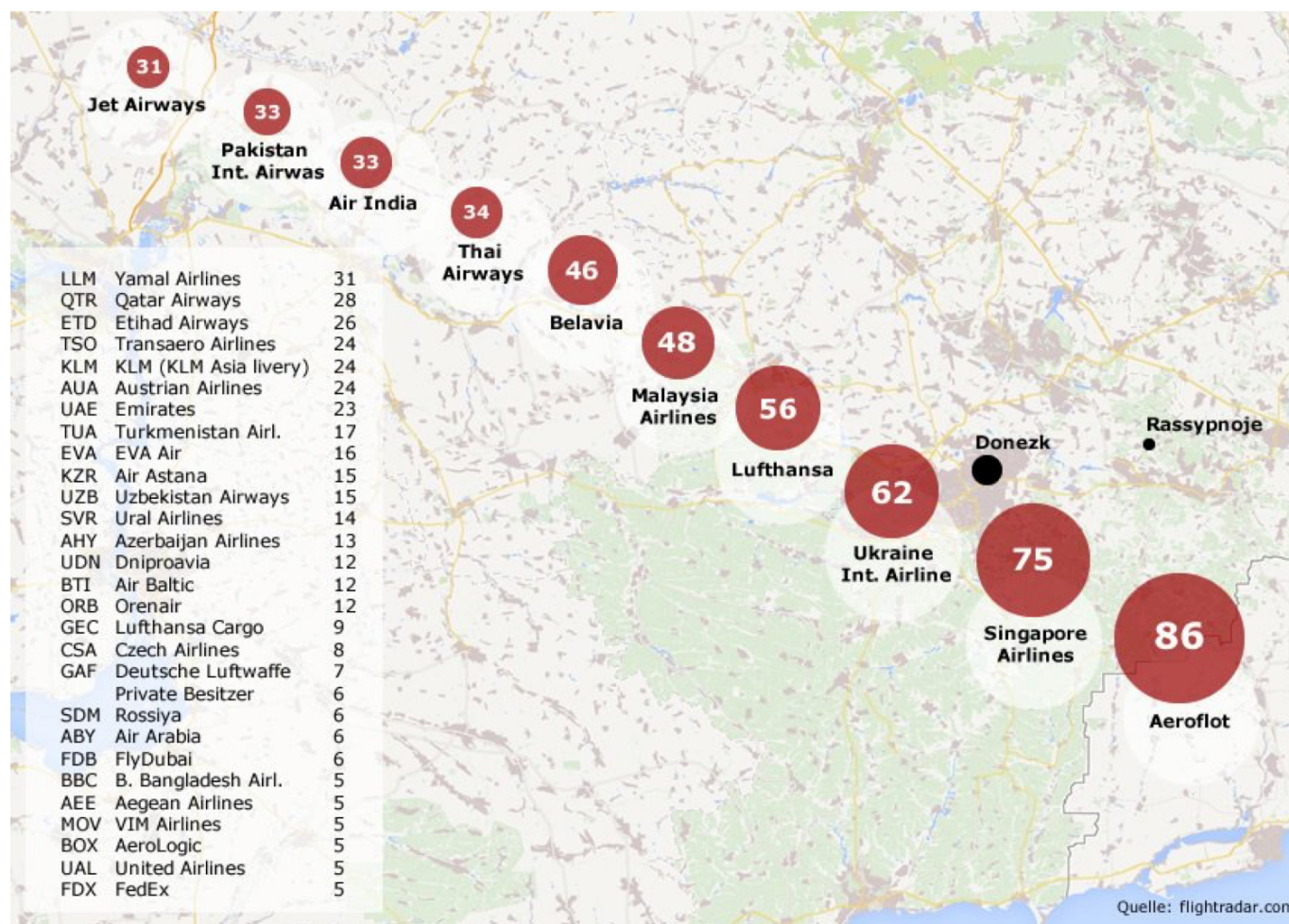


Image: Der Spiegel

And then it happened, and none of us could quite believe it.

But we learned. “Conflict Zone” became a buzzword. We had task forces and committees, whitepapers and promises, and—myself included—talked at length about how this happened, why, and how to avoid it in the future.

And yet, here we are flying unsuspecting passengers along the Syrian border. If you’re unsuspecting enough, and buy a SkyTeam codeshare ticket—you’ll actually overfly Syria on the Honey Badger airline of the region, Middle East Airlines.

Here we are flying passengers in the Eastern Mediterranean war zone. Why is this happening?

My guess: because we don’t think anything bad is going to happen, because the airspace boundary lines on the charts make that little bit of sea near Cyprus feel different from that little bit of sea near Syria, but mainly because there is **no clear guidance from Aviation Authorities**.

Let’s start with Cyprus. The Nicosia FIR has a big chunk of unsafe airspace. The Russian aircraft on Monday



was shot down on the Nicosia FIR boundary. What do the Notams say? Take a look. There are 97 of them. Mostly about fireworks at local hotels. Critical stuff indeed. Then there are 20 or 30 about “Russian naval exercises”. A clue, perhaps, but where is the black and white **“An Aircraft was Shot Down on our Border on Monday?”**. Or, since we are still using teletype to communicate Notams to crews, “AN AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT DOWN ON OUR BORDER ON MONDAY”. Wait, we have to abbreviate that, and use codes, for some reason. “ACFT SHOT DOWN ON FIR BDY 17SEP”. That’s better.

What about Turkey? Anything on the Eastern Mediterranean risk? Let’s have a look. Nope, just 132 Bullshit Notams, and something about an AWACS aircraft. See you back here in 30 minutes when you’ve read them all.

**Remember, I’m being a pilot, an airline, a dispatcher, trying to find information on the Risk in the Eastern Mediterranean. And this is how hard it is.**

EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency), how are you doing? Let’s start here, at the **“Information on Conflict Zones”**. Paragraph 2 tells us that ICAO have a Central Repository on Conflict Zones, launched in 2015.

No, they don’t. That died—quite a long time ago. This is where it used to live. So, there is no ICAO Central Repository on Conflict Zones. There is a new ICAO document with guidance on managing Conflict Zone risk (and it’s a bloody good one, too)—but where is the picture of current risk?

Let’s plough on through the EASA site. Aha! Seems we have a Conflict Zone alerting system, and Conflict Zone bulletins. Here they all are: <https://ad.easa.europa.eu/czib-docs/page-1>

The last one on Syria was issued on April 17th. But it seems to be just a list of Notams issued by other states. And these are out of date. The German Notam has expired, the French AIC has been replaced.

And there’s no guidance. No Map. No routes to avoid. Nothing about Cyprus, or Beirut. No mention of the Russian shootdown. No mention of the 9 aircraft shot down this year.

How am I supposed to know, as an operator, or pilot, what the risks are and where to avoid. We’re getting closer to the point here. **You’re not supposed to rely on the Aviation Authority. That is their message.** You must conduct your own risk assessment. You must research and find out about the risks yourself.

You are on your own.

If you’re a big airline, that’s probably fine. You’ll make your own decisions about where to fly, anyhow. But what about everybody else?

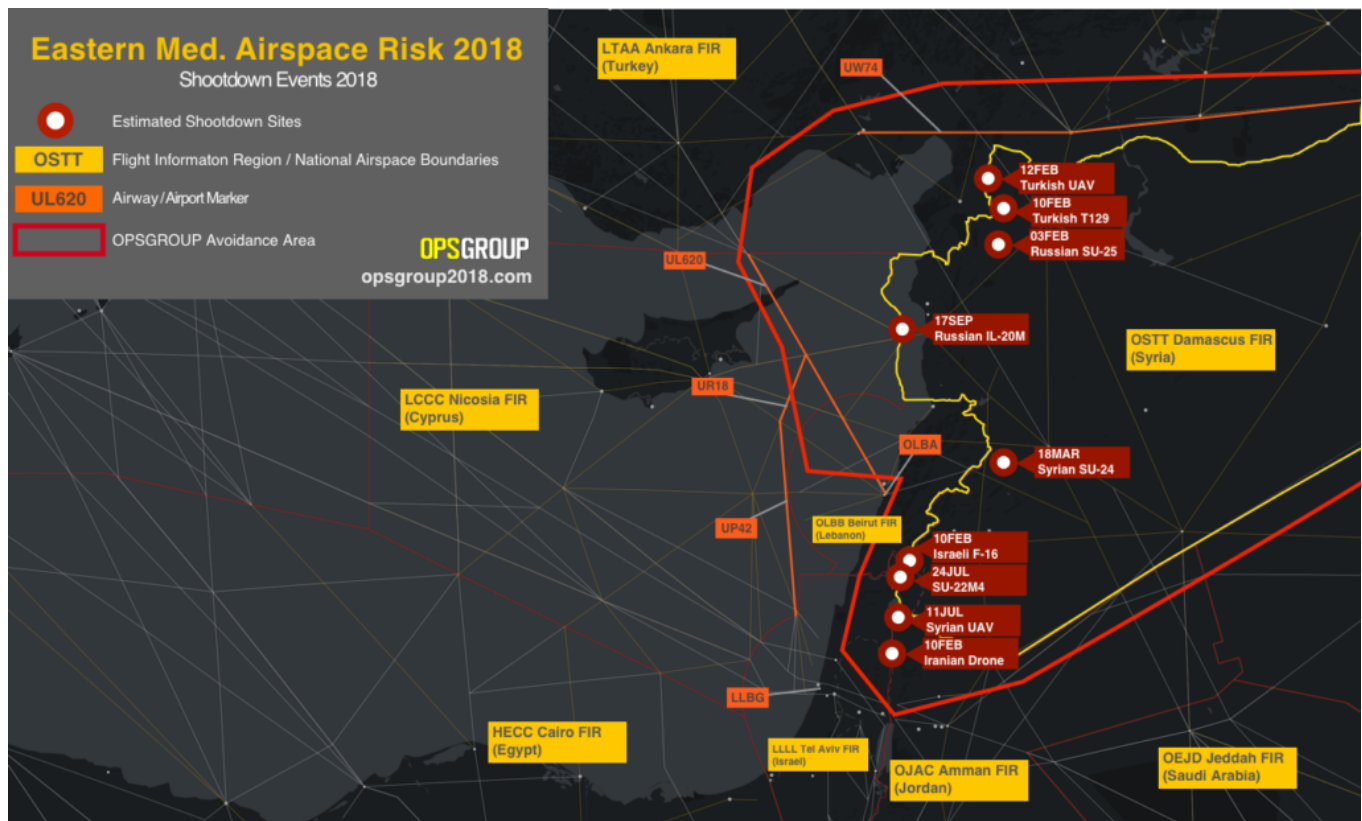
While OpsGroup works hard to get information out to our members—and we spend a lot of time researching risk—I would greatly prefer that we didn’t have to.

**Aviation Authorities must issue better guidance for the aircraft entering their areas.**

Let me remind you. Airlines are operating 50 miles from a position where an airplane was shot down at night, by a missile type that’s already taken out a passenger airliner by mistake, fired by a beleaguered Syrian defence post, at a friendly aircraft that they did not take time to identify.

And the guidance to operators from Authorities: **NIL.**

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Opsgroup has now published Note 31: Airspace Risk in the Eastern Mediterranean. **There is a clear risk to civil aircraft operating on airways UL620, UW74, UR18, and UP62. In simple terms, if you find yourself planned overwater east of Cyprus, reconsider your route.**

# OPSGROUP®

## NOTE TO MEMBERS #31 21 SEP 2018

### ISSUED BY OPSGROUP

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**SUBJECT:**  
**EASTERN MED AIRSPACE RISK**  
**ISSUED: 21 SEP 2018**

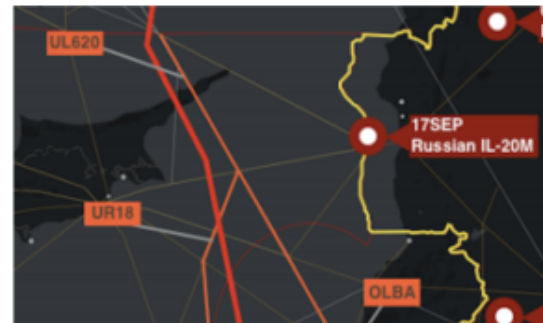
**CIRCULATION: OPSGROUP**

### Situation/Event

On Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, Syria shot down a Russian IL-20M transport category aircraft, mistaking it for an Israeli fighter. All on board died.

The position of the shootdown was – according to Russia Mil - **35°19'N 35°41'E** – on the Nicosia (LCCC) / Damascus (OSTT) boundary, over international waters 20nm off the coast of Syria.

This event significantly changes the risk picture for civil aircraft operating in the vicinity of Syria. There is a **clear risk to civil aircraft** operating on airways UL620, UW74, UR18, and UP62. In simple terms, if you find yourself planned **overwater east of Cyprus**, reconsider your route.



Shootdown location of Russian IL-20M. Full Eastern Mediterranean Risk Picture on next page.

### Primary concerns

1. The shootdown of the Russian IL-20M on Sep 17 was a mistake. The Syrian defences were under attack by Israel, and assumed it was another attack aircraft. Russia is an ally for them, so this was a friendly aircraft. If Syria can make this magnitude of mistake, **it can clearly also misidentify civil aircraft operating in the vicinity**.
2. The position of the shootdown is only **50nm away** from UL620 – still heavily in use by civil traffic inbound to Beirut. UR18 is also very close.
3. The missile used by Syria 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.

### Siberia 1812 lessons

In 2001, Ukraine shot down, by accident, a Siberian Airlines Tupolev 154, killing 78 passengers and crew.

Ukrainian officials speculated that water interference caused the missile to veer off course.

US assessment indicated the S-200 missile overshot its target drone - and instead of self-destructing, locked on to the passenger aircraft about 134nm further away and detonated 50 ft over the aircraft.

- ICAO Doc 10084 – Risk Assessment Manual for Civil aircraft flying over or near conflict zones. This was published this year, fully updated – read it!
  - Safeairspace. Managed by OpsGroup, this is our public repository and first point of warning for Airspace Risk for airlines, pilots, dispatchers, and aircraft operators.
- 

## Europe squawks 7600 on ops in the Eastern Med

OPSGROUP Team

3 January, 2023



As we reported last month, Eurocontrol published a ‘Rapid Alert Notification’ on their website regarding imminent air strikes into Syria.

“Due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria with air-to-ground and / or cruise missiles within the next 72 hours, and the possibility of intermittent disruption of radio navigation equipment, due consideration needs to be taken when planning flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean / Nicosia FIR area.”

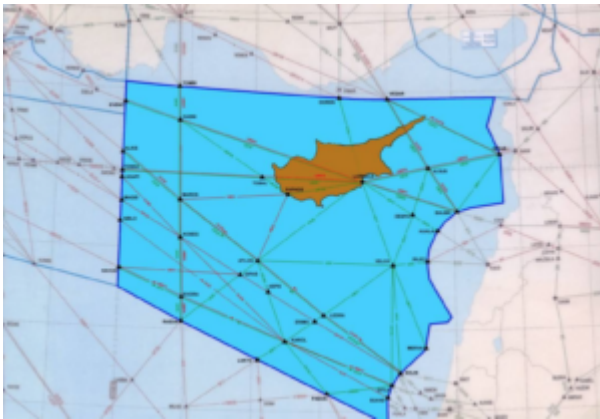
Around this time LCCC/Nicosia FIR released this vague (and now deleted) NOTAM:

A0454/18 – INFORMATION TO AIRSPACE USERS

THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS IS CONTINUOUSLY MONITORING THE GEOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION AND WILL NOTIFY THE AVIATION COMMUNITY IF AND WHEN ANY RELEVANT AND RELIABLE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION IS TAKING ALL APPROPRIATE ACTION TO SAFEGUARD



THE SAFETY OF FLIGHTS. 12 APR 15:25 2018 UNTIL 12 JUL 15:00 2018 ESTIMATED. CREATED:  
12 APR 15:26 2018



Beyond this alert and NOTAM though; nothing else happened. A few days later, the conflict escalated.

Very few commercial flights operate over Syria, and authorities in the US, UK, France and Germany have all previously issued warnings for Syrian airspace.

But many airlines regularly transit the LCCC/Nicosia FIR: there are frequent holiday flights to the main Cypriot airports of LCLK/Larnaca and LCPH/Paphos; overflight traffic from Europe to the likes of OLBA/Beirut, OJAI/Amman and LLBG/Tel Aviv; as well as traffic from Istanbul heading south to the Gulf and beyond.



**What has happened in the few weeks since then?**

Normal Eurocontrol protocol is (during expected ATC strike for example) – regular teleconferences with operators, active re-routes and removal of certain overflight approval requirements. So did that happen this time? **No.**

Essentially just radio silence on Syria and operations in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Right now, it's a busy place. With all the normal holiday traffic in the region, there is also a large number of military surveillance aircraft from numerous nations patrolling the region. United States assets operating from Greece and Italy. UK air power from Cyprus and the French from bases in Jordan. Add to that the normal Israeli defense air frames and even the odd Swedish gulfstream surveillance flight! Then there are the Russians conducting aerial operations and defense exercises in and around Syria.

Cyprus has activated a litany of “temporary reserved/segregated areas” inside of Nicosia FIR.

On May 3rd, Cyprus issued this vague information, to ‘exercise caution’.

A0580/18 – NAVIGATIONAL WARNING TO ALL CONCERNED. EXTENSIVE MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NICOSIA FIR PILOTS TO **EXERCISE CAUTION** AND MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS RADIO CONTACT WITH NICOSIA ACC. 03 MAY 12:00 2018 UNTIL 31 MAY 23:59 2018. CREATED: 03 MAY 11:25 2018

There is also a current warning about GPS interruptions.

A0356/18 – RECENTLY, GPS SIGNAL INTERRUPTIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED BY THE PILOTS OF THE AIRCRAFT OPERATING WITHIN SOME PARTS OF NICOSIA FIR. AIRCRAFT OPERATORS OPERATING WITHIN NICOSIA FIR ARE ADVISED TO **EXERCISE CAUTION**. 20 MAR 10:04 2018 UNTIL PERM. CREATED: 20 MAR 10:05 2018

It may be unfair to blame the authorities completely. At the end of the day, due to the lack of appropriate communication from the various security agencies it’s hard to get accurate information out there. Still, there was enough warning to alert civilian operators of imminent strike – but then nothing else. Shouldn’t airspace customers and users expect more?

### **So what to make of all this?**

Let’s end it with this great 2009 (and still current) NOTAM from the Cypriots.

A0687/09 – **NAVIGATION WARNING TO ALL CONCERNED.**

15 SEP 09:30 2009 UNTIL PERM. CREATED: 15 SEP 09:34 2009

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## **Who is still flying over Syria?**

OPSGROUP Team  
3 January, 2023



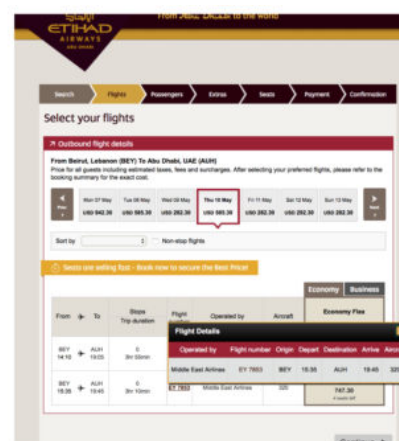
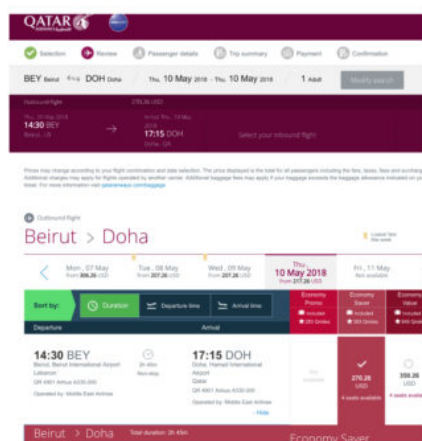
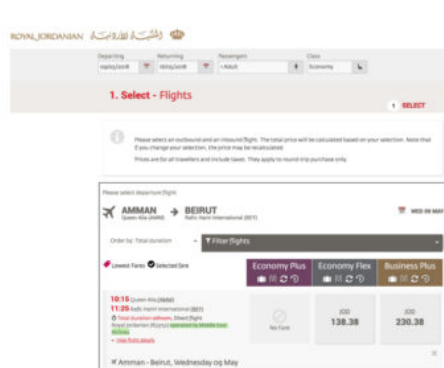
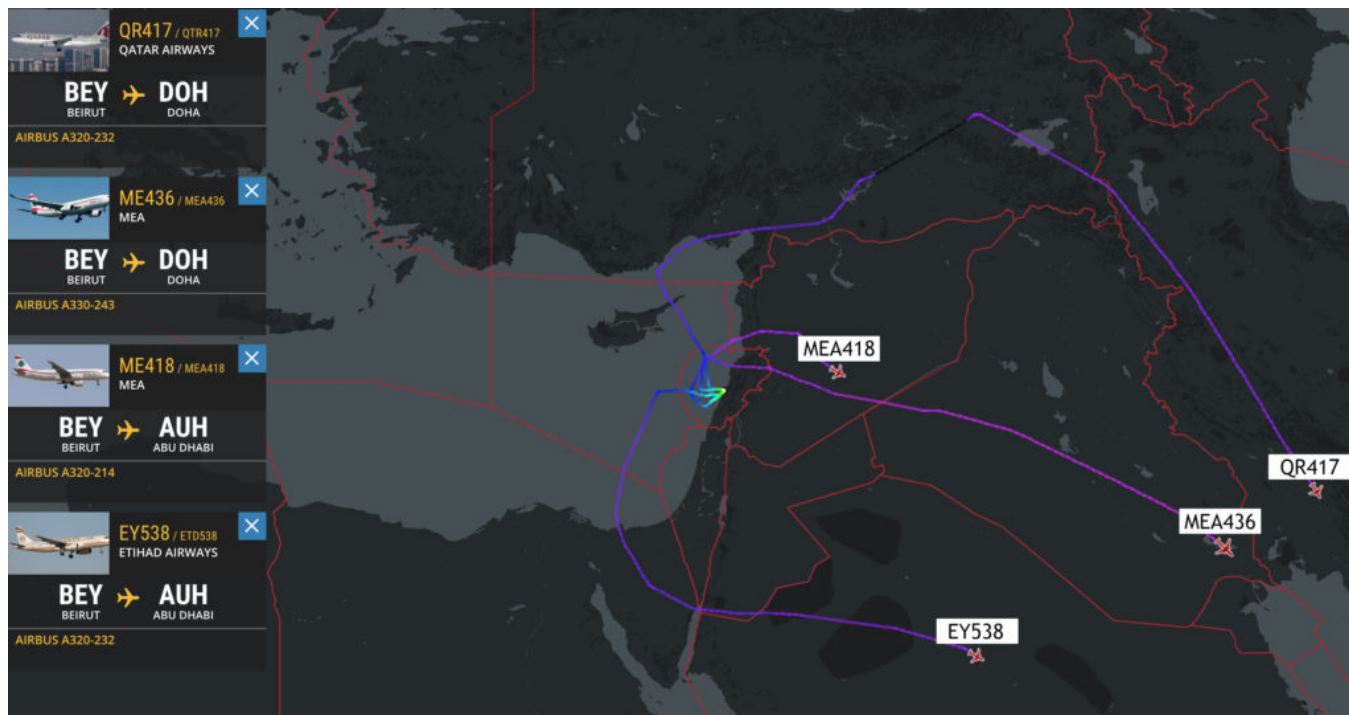
We have reported recently on the complex airspace picture and dangers associated with the ongoing Syrian conflict.

Most major carriers have taken the advice of numerous government agencies to avoid Syrian airspace altogether; the FAA going as far as calling on all operators flying within 200 nautical miles of the OSTT/Damascus FIR to “exercise caution”. Today, the only airlines flying over the airspace are locally based Syrian airlines, Iraq Airlines and Lebanon’s Middle Eastern Airlines.



**These MEA overflights are of interest.** The airline is a member of the SkyTeam alliance and has codeshare agreements with several high-profile airlines (Air Canada, Air France, etc.) Despite the repeated warnings of the ongoing dangers associated with overflights of this conflict zone, the airline has chosen to schedule more than half-a-dozen flights over the airspace each day.

Some of these flights have the usual codeshare practise of other airlines booking their passengers on MEA flights. Our research shows that Etihad Airways, Qatar Airways (Oneworld Alliance) and Royal Jordanian Airlines (Oneworld Alliance) passengers are still being booked on MEA flights to/from Beirut; likely unbeknown to their customers of the increased flight risk. All three airlines continue to service Beirut with their own aircraft, but all three avoid Syrian airspace, naturally accepting the best advice to avoid the area completely.



Something isn't right here: no warning anywhere about these flights being flown over Syria.

**So why is it safe for passengers to overfly Syria on an MEA flight, but not on any of the other airlines? And more importantly, why is MEA still operating over Syria anyway?**

It looks like Kuwait Airways will be the next codeshare partner of MEA, so it will be interesting to see whether the issue of the overflight of conflict zones will be discussed.

As always, keep an eye on our Safeairspace map for the latest worldwide updates.

## US updates its Syria airspace warning

OPSGROUP Team  
3 January, 2023





**Following the US, UK and French airstrikes on Syria on April 14, the US FAA say there is now a risk posed to civil aviation within 200 nautical miles of the country due to increased military activity, GPS and comms interference, and the potential for more long range surface-to-air missiles in the area.**

In the updated US FAA conflict zone Notam and Background Information for Syria, US civil aviation continues to be prohibited from operating within Syrian airspace, but has also now been instructed to “exercise caution” when operating within 200 nautical miles of Syria’s OSTT/Damascus FIR.

As they say in the Background Information doc, here’s why this updated guidance has been published:

“Heightened military activity associated with the Syrian conflict has the potential to spill over into the adjacent airspace managed by neighboring states and eastern portions of the Mediterranean Sea. Military operations may result in the risk of GPS interference, communications jamming, and errant long-range SAMs straying into adjacent airspace within 200 nautical miles of the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR). These activities may inadvertently pose hazards to U.S. civil aviation transiting the region. This concern stems from the Syrian military response to previous airstrikes on 10 February 2018, which included Syrian forces launching long-range SAMs. Some of the Syrian SAMs flew into adjacent airspace and landed in Lebanon and Jordan, according to media reporting. GPS interference and communications jamming in the region may also occur associated with the military activity. Some U.S. air carriers have reported GPS interference in portions of the eastern Mediterranean Sea in the period following the 10 February airstrikes, and the interference may have originated from the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR) as a defensive response.”

The US FAA haven’t provided a map to show where boundary would lie for 200 nautical miles from the border of Syrian airspace, but we think it would look something like this:

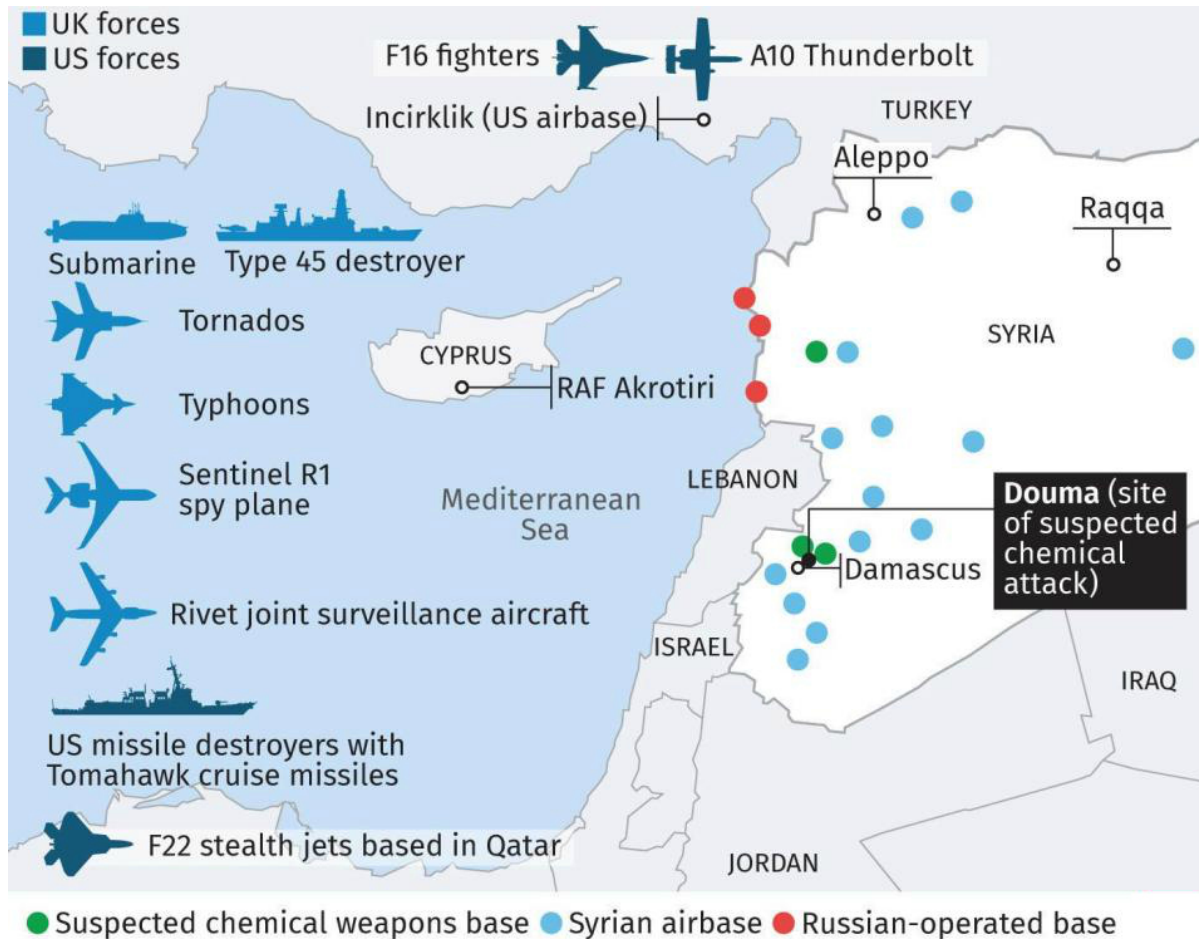


The 200 nautical mile zone would include the entire airspace of Lebanon, Jordan and Israel; half of Turkey and Iraq; and a portion of airspace over the LCCC/Nicosia FIR that covers the whole island of Cyprus!

The area may seem vast, but the possibility of further US, UK and French strikes against Syrian targets does still exist, as well as the Syrian military using surface-to-air missiles in response to any attacks.

During the airstrikes on April 14, the Syrian military reportedly used Russian-made missile systems to attempt to counter the strikes – these included missiles which have the capability to engage aircraft at altitudes well above FL900 and at ranges of around 190 miles.

While there is likely no intention to target civil aircraft, with all the missile defence activity going on in Syria and the spillover into neighbouring countries there still remains a risk of misidentification – and that's what the 200 nautical mile warning seeks to address.

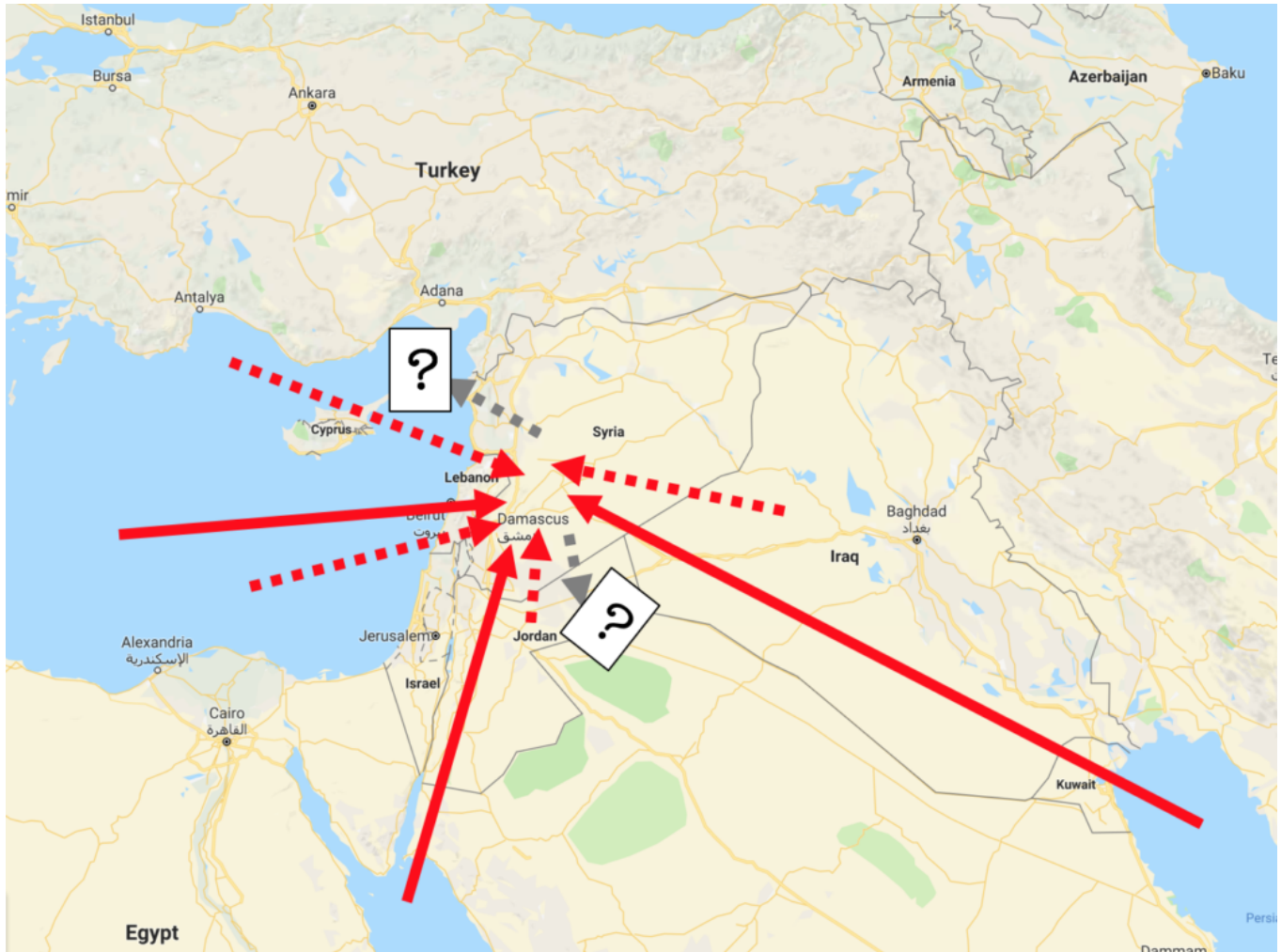


Amidst continued heavy military air presence in the region, almost all airlines are now avoiding Syrian airspace entirely. Lebanon's Beirut based MEA has now also re-routed all of their flights to avoid Syrian Airspace (was using it post recent attacks). Only local operators Fly Damas, Charm Wing Airlines, Syrian Air and Iran's Mahan Air continue to use the airspace.

Here's what the Pentagon had to say about the airstrikes on April 14:

- **105 missiles** were launched in the strikes against Syria. They included **30 Tomahawk missiles fired from** the USS Monterey and seven from the USS Laboon in the **Red Sea**. Another **23 Tomahawk missiles were launched from** the USS Higgins in the **North Arabian Gulf**.
- A submarine, USS John Warner, fired **six Tomahawk missiles from the eastern Mediterranean** and a French frigate in the same area fired another three missiles.
- At least one US Navy warship operating in the Red Sea participated in airstrikes, as well as US B-1 bombers.
- The air assault involved **two US B-1 Lancer bombers**, which fired **19 joint air to surface standoff missiles**. The **British** flew a combination of **Tornado and Typhoon jets**, firing **eight Storm Shadow missiles**, while **French** Rafale and Mirage fighter jets launched **nine SCALP missiles**.
- Four Royal Air Force Tornado GR4's were used in the strikes, launching Storm Shadow missiles at a "former missile base — some 15 miles west of Homs," according to the UK Ministry of Defense.

- **Syria fired 40 surface to air missiles 'at nothing'** after allied air strikes destroyed three Assad chemical sites.
- The United States remains **"locked and loaded"** to launch further attacks.
- **United States** and Allies **maintain positive posture of force** in the region, especially in the air.



*105 missiles launched from multiple locations in the region.  
Over 40 Syrian surface to air missiles fired "at nothing".*

#### **Further Reading:**

- Everything We Know (And No One Has Said So Far) About The First Wave Of Air Strikes On Syria.
- US FAA KICZ Notam 9/18 - Syria.
- US FAA Background Notice.
- Safeairspace has been updated to reflect the latest information.
- And finally, just in case you were wondering what the airspace authorities in Cyprus have to say about all this, here's the superbly vague Notam they issued on the subject:

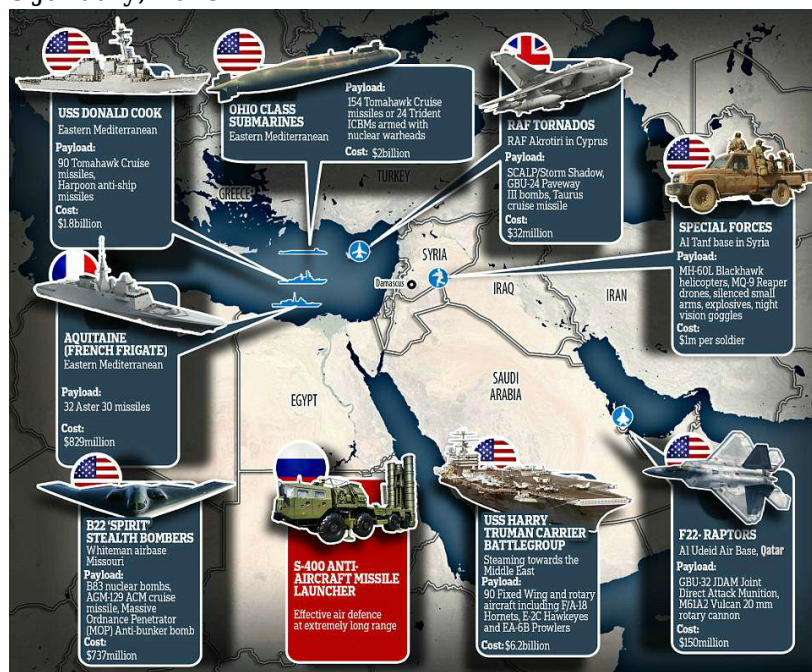


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If you have anything to share that we've missed, please tell us by email [bulletin@fsbureau.org](mailto:bulletin@fsbureau.org)

# European air traffic warned over Syria strikes

David Mumford  
3 January, 2023



**EASA are warning of possible air strikes into Syria being launched from locations within the LCCC/Nicosia FIR over the next 72 hours (Apr 11-14).**

Eurocontrol have published a 'Rapid Alert Notification' on their website, with a statement from EASA that reads:

"Due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria with air-to-ground and / or cruise missiles within the next 72 hours, and the possibility of intermittent disruption of radio navigation equipment, due consideration needs to be taken when planning flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean / Nicosia FIR area."

Very few commercial flights operate over Syria, and authorities in the US, UK, France and Germany have all previously issued warnings for Syrian airspace.

But many airlines regularly transit the LCCC/Nicosia FIR: there are frequent holiday flights to the main Cypriot airports of LCLK/Larnaca and LCPH/Paphos; overflight traffic from Europe to the likes of

OLBA/Beirut, OJAI/Amman and LLBG/Tel Aviv; as well as traffic from Istanbul heading south to the Gulf and beyond.



Last year, two US warships in the eastern Mediterranean fired missiles at an air base in Syria after a chemical weapons attack by the Assad regime killed more than 80 people.

This week, following another suspected chemical attack by the Syrian government against civilians in a rebel-held town in Syria, the US President Donald Trump warned there would be a “forceful” response. On Apr 11, he took to Twitter to warn Russia to prepare for strike on Syria:



**Donald J. Trump**   
@realDonaldTrump

Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and “smart!” You shouldn’t be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!

11:57 AM - 11 Apr 2018

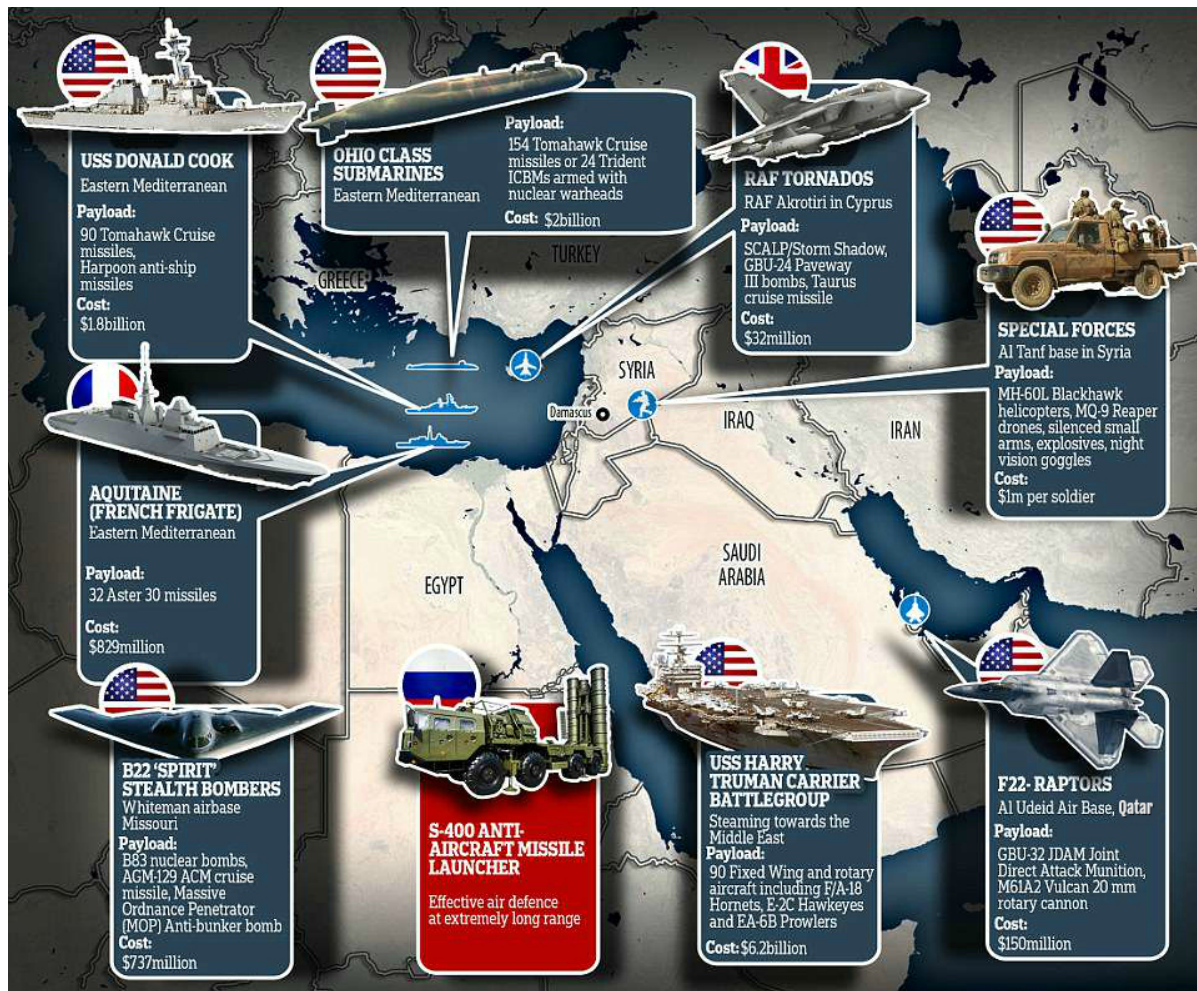
For the airstrikes on Syria last year, the US gave Russia advance warning of the attack, and Russian forces opted not to attempt to shoot down the missiles using its air defence systems stationed in the region.

However, this time round things could be very different. This week, Russia’s ambassador to Lebanon reminded the US that the head of the Russian military has said his forces in Syria would not only shoot down any missiles that threatened them but would target the source of the weapons as well.

The only US warship currently in the Mediterranean and capable of a possible strike is the USS Donald Cook, which left port in Larnaca and started to patrol in vicinity of Syria on Apr 9. According to some reports, it has since weighed anchor off Syrian territorial waters, and has been “buzzed” by low-flying Russian military jets.

Another 3 warships of the Sixth Fleet are already in the Atlantic Ocean, and on Apr 11 the entire US Truman Fleet (including an aircraft carrier, 6 destroyers, and nearly 6,500 sailors) departed Norfolk, Virginia, to head to the Mediterranean Sea. However, it may take up to a week for any of these warships to arrive.

Here's an overview of US and coalition forces' military options currently thought to be on offer in the eastern Mediterranean:



With the downing of MH17 by a surface-to-air missile over Ukraine in 2014, as well as all the recent unannounced missile tests by North Korea, there has been increased focus by the aviation community on the risks posed by conflict zones. If any missiles are launched from the Eastern Mediterranean in the next few days, be prepared for possible last-minute reroutes, as any Notams that get published may not give much warning.

### Further reading:

One of our biggest missions in OPSGROUP is to share risk information and keep operators aware of the current threat picture. Check out Safeairspace for the most up-to-date information on airspace safety around the world.



# Feb 2018: Tel Aviv Airport closes as a precaution against attack

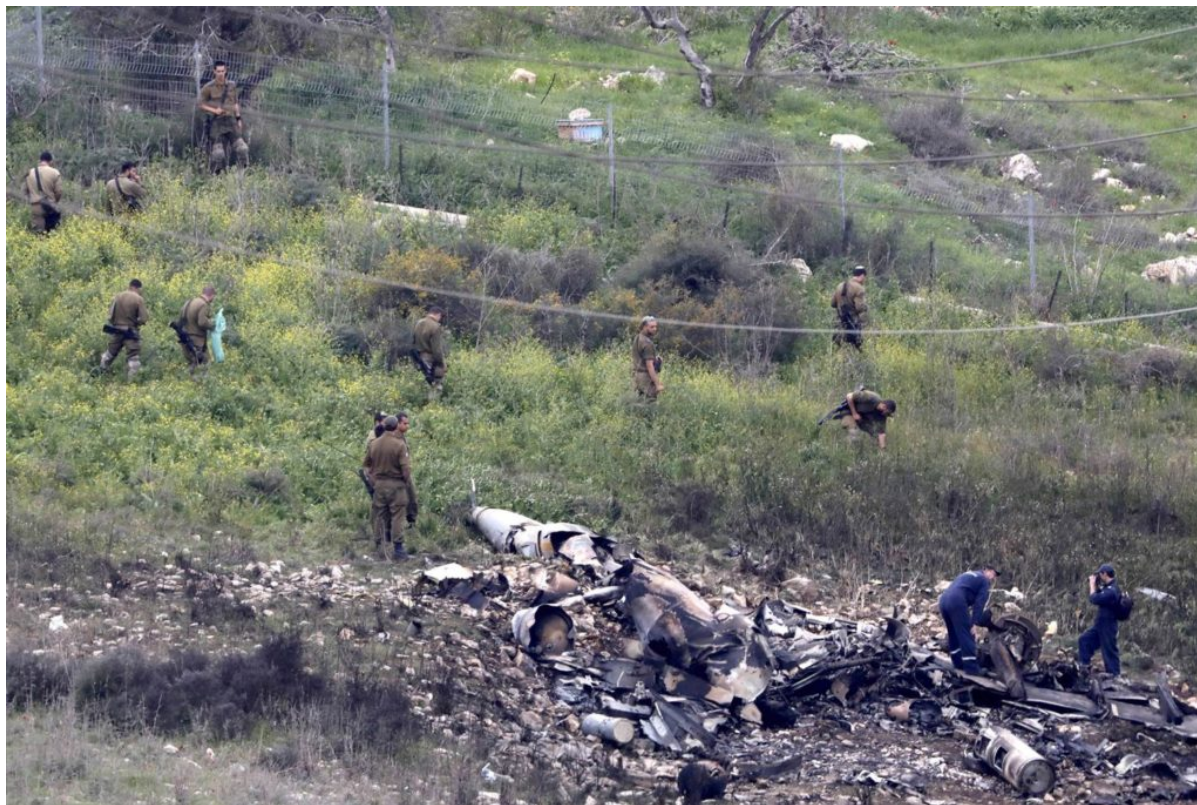
David Mumford  
3 January, 2023



**LLBG/Tel-aviv: Israel's main airport briefly suspended operations on Feb 10, due to military clashes along the northern border with Syria.**

Two Israeli pilots were forced to abandon their F-16 jet, which crashed near the border after being hit by a Syrian anti-aircraft missile. The jet was on a mission in which it struck an Iranian facility in Syria that had previously operated a drone which Israel shot down over its territory.





This resulted in all flights from LLBG/Tel-aviv Airport being grounded for around an hour starting at 9am local time, as a precaution against any further attacks. The airport is considered a strategic location that could be targeted during military conflict.

Here's what Israel's PM had to say about it:

This incident marks the most significant engagement by Israel in the fighting that has been taking place in neighbouring Syria since 2011. Israel has mostly stayed out of the conflict so far, but has recently become more concerned about the increased Iranian presence along its border.

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## **International Bulletin: Hong Kong pain in the ass, Haiti relief operations**

Cynthia Claros  
3 January, 2023

# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

ISSUED BY FLIGHT SERVICE BUREAU

SITA HNLFSXH AKLFSXH AFTN KMCOXAAL  
EMAIL INTL.DESK@FSBUREAU.ORG



**Hong Kong is a pain in the ass - it's official** 20OCT Authorities in Hong Kong confirmed yesterday that the airport is a giant pain, especially for non-scheduled operators. Lining up slots, parking, permits and handling is extremely difficult. End result: a mountain of frustration. Read the article.

**Haiti relief operations - and Airbus Flight 101** 20OCT After Hurricane Matthew last week, MTPP/Port-au-Prince (Toussaint Louverture) became a central focus in relief efforts for Haiti. **OpsGroup member Airbus** operated an amazing relief flight from Lyon. Read the article.

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**VTZZ/Thailand** is in a period of mourning following the death of His Majesty, King Bhumibol on 13 October. This is a time of deep sorrow for Thai people – refrain from any behaviour that may be interpreted as festive, disrespectful or disorderly. Abide by local laws and respect Thai customs. There may be some disruption of commercial and public services during the mourning period, especially during the first 30 days (until 13 November). Tourist attractions are open with the exception of Wat Pra Kaew (Temple of the Emerald Buddha) and the Grand Palace in Bangkok. Expect traffic disruptions and heightened security around these areas as people pay their respects to the late King.

**EBBR/Brussels** All non-scheduled flights destined to EBBR are allowed only after special permission by Airport Authority before start of flight. Contact +32 2 7536900 or inspect@brusselsairport.be.

**DTZZ/Tunisia** extended the state of emergency on 18OCT, set to expire, by three months. The state of emergency went into effect following a series of terrorist attacks in 2015 and has been extended multiple times.

**ORBB/Baghdad FIR** Traffic entering from Baghdad FIR (ORBB) to Ankara FIR (LTAA) shall file their FPL as follows: NINVA-OTKEP-SRT at FL320 and above. NOTAM A4572/16 refers.

**Solomon Islands** There has been a confirmed outbreak of dengue fever in the capital city, Honiara; you should follow the advice of the local authorities and take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes; you should take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling to the Solomon Islands

**TXKF/Bermuda** Due to maintenance, the Bermuda Radar system will be out of service on Friday. Recommended reroute to avoid airspace. New York Center overflight procedures will be in effect. Routes have been developed to provide limited non-radar service within the airspace. All departures from

Bermuda will be held down at FL310.

**OJAI/Amman, Jordan** Runway 26L/08R will be closed for urgent pavement maintenance on these days in November: 01,08,15,22,29: from 0930-1330Z. The airport will not be available for either normal operations or emergency divers during the closure period.

**OEZZ/Saudi Arabia** From 8 to 10 October there were several missile attacks reported near the Saudi / Yemeni border and the southern Red Sea.

**ZZZZ/Worldwide** Regulatory and voluntary bans on Samsung Galaxy Note7 smartphones is spreading as airlines and airport authorities around the world are announcing bans or restricted usage on the device, which has been withdrawn by Samsung after some devices caught fire. Ban notices are being issued primarily through airline online check-in pages, as well as via public announcements in airport terminals and onboard aircraft. The US Department of Transportation (DOT) was first to issue a total ban on taking the device on board, as a passenger or as air cargo, when it gave an emergency order Oct. 15 with FAA. The devices are being banned because of fire concerns, and the fallout following an incident involving a smoking smartphone on board a Southwest Airlines aircraft in Louisville, Kentucky on Oct. 5.

**YZZZ/Australia** will not be implementing the changes in the ICAO PANS-ATM (Doc 4444), as they say they haven't had enough time to work on the safety case – ie. figuring out if these changes are dangerous in any way. In short, they won't be saying "Climb via SID" or "Climb via STAR", which are the new phraseologies.

**TTZP/Piarco** wins the award for most confusing AIC of the week, namely AIC03/16 issued on 13OCT. Titled "RVSM Implementation", it appears that Trinidad is finally implementing RVSM in their airspace. But wait, they did that in 2005. So what's new in this AIC? It's a mystery. Take a look and see if you can spot it.

**KLAX/Los Angeles** 3 out of the 4 runways at KLAX have now been renovated. Runway 6R/24L reopened on 16OCT after renovations. Improvements to the fourth and final runway, 07L/25R, will begin OCT22 and continue until June 2017. This last runway will be partially closed until January, and then closed completely to allow for more extensive work to be done

**FSIA/Seychelles** Runway will be closed on Thursday 20 and 27 Oct between 1815-0245z and Friday 21 and 28 Oct between 1900-0215z. Can be opened in cases of emergency.

**UHPP/Petropavlovsk** Eruption in progress at Klyuchevskoy volcano (N5603E16038) near UHPP. Ash cloud reported at 0720z on 17 Oct from ground level up to FL300.

**VVZZ/Vietnam** Typhoon Sarika is forecast to bring hazardous sea and weather conditions to parts of northern Vietnam from around 19 October 2016; heavy rainfall could lead to flooding and landslides

**KLAS/Las Vegas** Because of the next presidential debate that will be held in Las Vegas on October 19, 2016, intermittent road closures will affect access to McCarran International Airport (LAS) between 4 pm and 10 pm on that date. The recommended route to the airport from the east side of the valley is westbound Flamingo Road to southbound Paradise Road. The recommended route to the airport from the west side of the valley is eastbound Tropicana Avenue to southbound Paradise Road.

**OIIX/Tehran** FIR The minimum safe level on R462 between DENDA and METBI has been raised to FL140.

**KSFO/San Francisco** has a new ATC Tower operational since Sunday last, located between Terminals 1 and 2. Per the local report, it "offers controllers a 650-square-foot work area with unobstructed 235-degree views of the airport's runways and taxiways". Hopefully there's not much going on in the other 125 degrees.

**OSZZ/Syria** Russia's only aircraft carrier, Admiral Kuznetsov, is nearing the end of a work-up period

outside the port of Murmansk before heading for the eastern Mediterranean, reportedly to begin air operations against targets in Syria.

**EGPK/Prestwick** will be closed from midnight to 0400Z on 21OCT, due to a planned ATC power outage. ATC reachable during outage at +447917 424603.

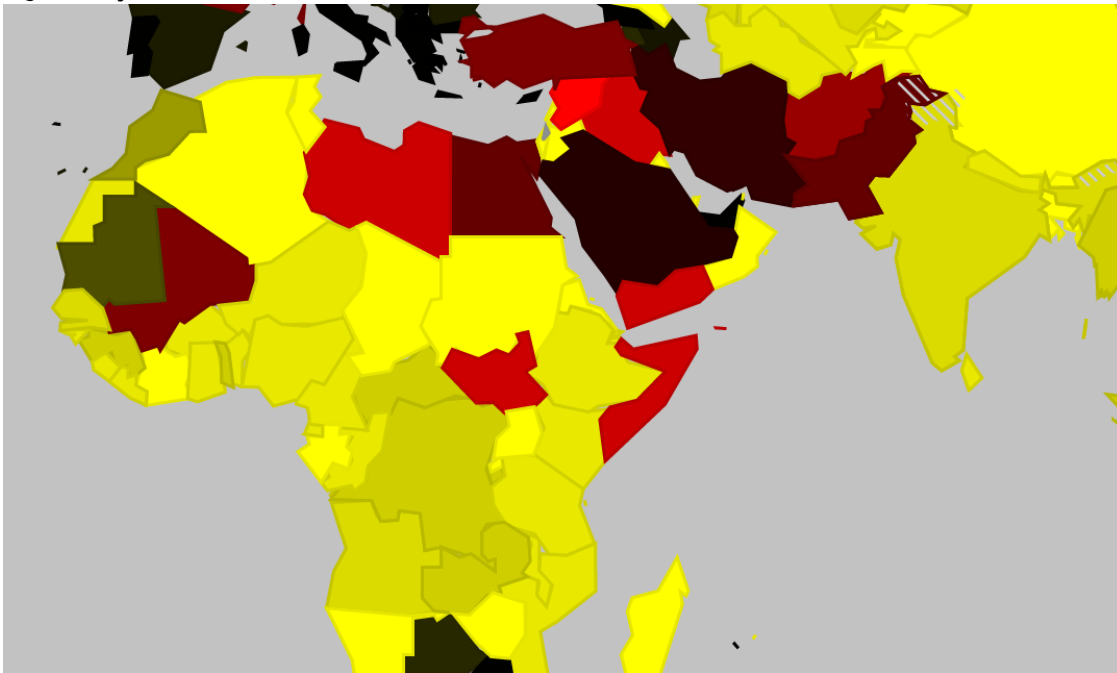
**RPZZ/Philippines** Typhoon Sarika recently passed through the island of Luzon as a category 4 storm. Transportation routes, power and telecommunications systems could be affected in some areas. Other services that may be affected in these areas include emergency and medical care, as well as water and food supplies. If travelling to affected areas, exercise caution, monitor local news and weather reports, and follow the advice of local authorities.

[View full International Bulletin 20OCT2016](#)

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## Unsafe Airspace - a summary

Declan Selleck  
3 January, 2023



With the events surrounding the shutdown of MAS17, risk assessment of potentially unsafe airspace has given far greater weighting to the situation on the ground. Access to reliable information to determine the ever-changing risk level, is by nature of it's inherent uncertainty, challenging.

**Today we published International Ops Notice 02/16 - "Unsafe Airspace".**

Three levels of airspace risk are used in our assessment.

- LEVEL 1. Moderate risk - No Fly
- LEVEL 2. Assessed risk
- LEVEL 3. Caution



The countries that issue the most relevant updates for unsafe airspace are: The US (FAA) – through FDC Notams and SFARs, the UK (NATS) – AIP and Notam, Germany (DFS) – Notam, France (DGAC)- AIC. **In general, the Civil Aviation Authorities of the countries whose airspace is determined to be unsafe are unlikely to issue reliable guidance.**

**Five countries are currently included in the LEVEL 1 - Moderate Risk category: Libya, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and Yemen.**

The basis for inclusion is the highly unstable current events on the ground, and in all cases the ground factions having access to RPG's, Surface-Air missiles. We strongly recommend avoiding this airspace entirely. All countries have multiple warnings, and your country of registry is likely to have issued specific instructions not to penetrate these airspaces.

Download the full notice.

References:

- **Flight Service Bureau Notice 02/16**

