

The Missile that Missed by a Mile (or 25)

OPSGROUP Team
28 October, 2021



On October 6, 2021, a Transavia Boeing 737-800 was routing from DTTJ/Djerba, Tunisia to LFPO/Paris Orly when they **reported seeing a missile explode** in what they thought was close proximity to the aircraft.

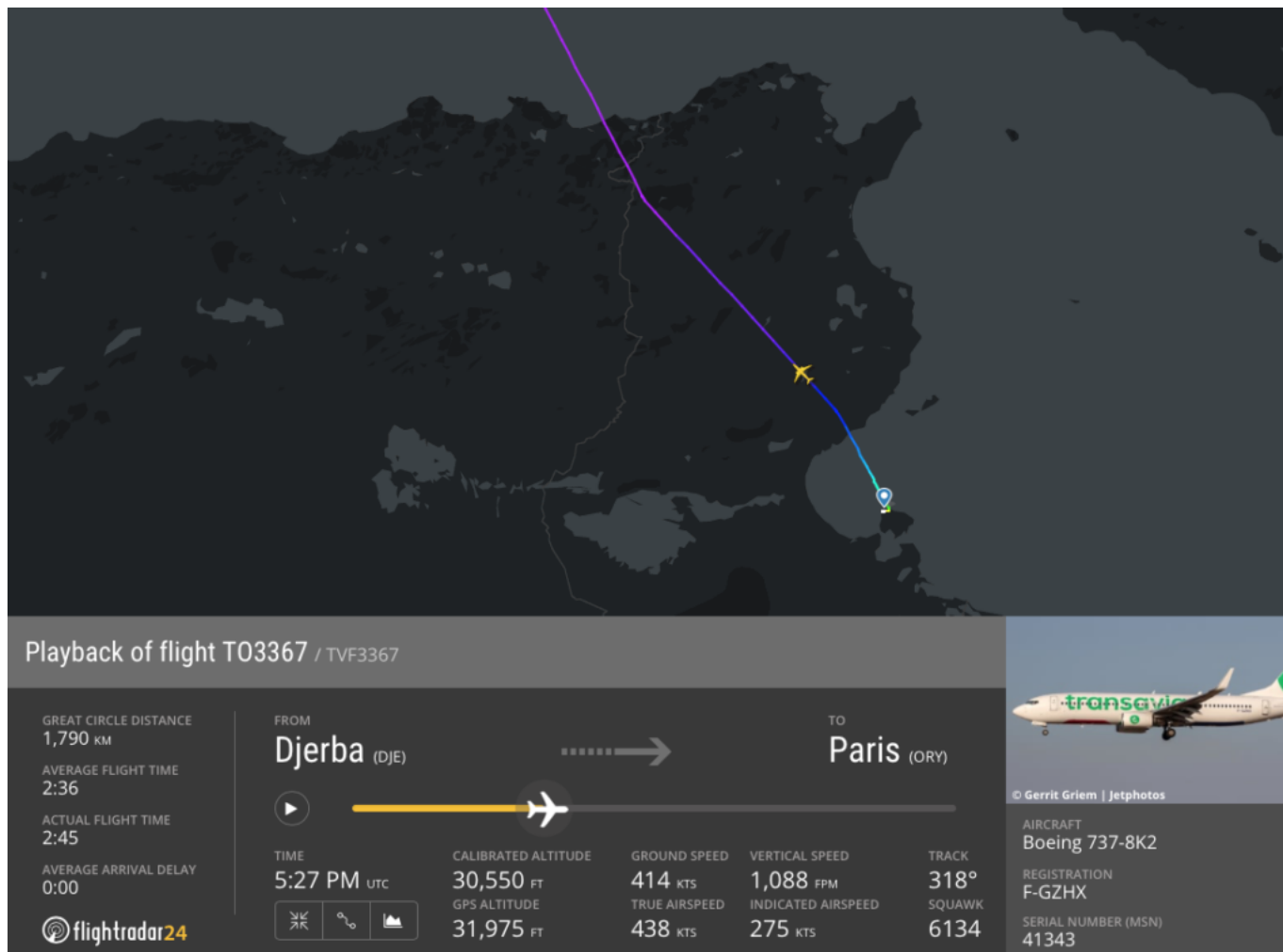
The Flight Report

TO-3367, registration F-GZHX was climbing through approximately FL300. Their position was around **80nm north west of DTTJ/Djerba**, and about 110nm south of DTTA/Tunis when they reported a missile exploding in their 10 o'clock position, **at the same altitude**, and in close proximity. A second aircraft in the area also confirmed seeing an explosion.

When reported, ATC advised there was an active military area approximately 25nm west.

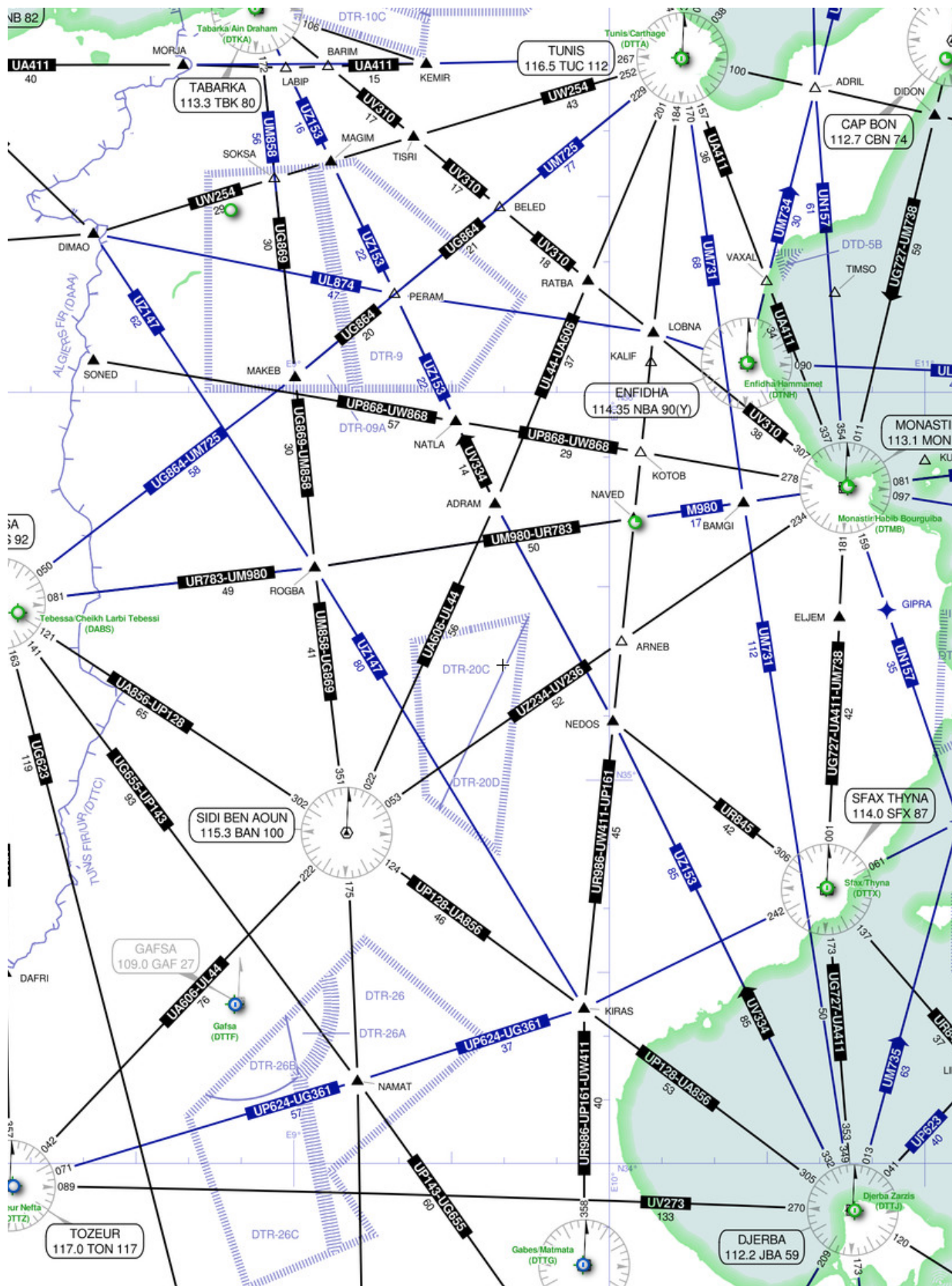
Where did it happen?

The FlightRadar tracking of the flight suggests they were likely routing along the **UZ153 airway**.



FlightRadar playback

Waypoint NEDOS appears to correspond with the approximate position of the aircraft, and this lies to the east of the **DTR-20C/DTR-20D military zone** suggesting this is likely to be the zone where activity was taking place.



DTR-20C and DTR-20D are the likely areas where military activity was taking place

What does the Tunisia AIP say?

ENR 5.1 – 4 details DTR 20c and 20D as being active for military exercises in VMC only. It is operational Monday to Friday from sunrise to sunset and on Saturdays from sunrise to 1300. The limits are FL105 to FL245.

Are there other active areas?

Search Notams for the DTTC/Tunis FIR and you will find a **long list of military activities and firing exercises**.

The ‘firings’ are for guns, rockets or missiles, but at low levels (below 2,500’ msl for the most part). The military activities are of more interest because they are not all bounded by published restricted, danger or prohibited areas, meaning you are going to need to check these by plotting them out.

A2070/12 reserves an airspace which reaches from 13,000’ to 30,000’. A second some extends from FL100 to FL250, advised via **Notam A2072/21**.

There are also Notams advising that *‘due to military activities new corridors are being implemented’*.

While these did not impact the Transavia flight, and do not necessarily mean any risk for overflying traffic, they do pose a threat simply because of the upper limits and the sheer number of spots to avoid.

So was there a risk here?

The *unusual* element of the Transavia incident would be the **proximity of a major airway to an active missile firing zone**, or rather the firing of a missile which may have reached **altitudes above the published upper limits**, *in close proximity to a major airway*.

However, this assumption is based off the crew’s observation of the missile altitude. Tunisia does not reportedly possess missiles which are capable of reaching altitudes of 30,000’, and the difficulty in accurately observing the altitude of an ‘object’ at a distance with little external context is extremely hard.

An investigation is underway but a highly probable explanation is that the **crew misjudged the altitude and proximity of this missile**, and no risk occurred.



Glance at this for 2 seconds and then determine the height of the clouds in relation to the aircraft...

Should we watch out for military exercises?

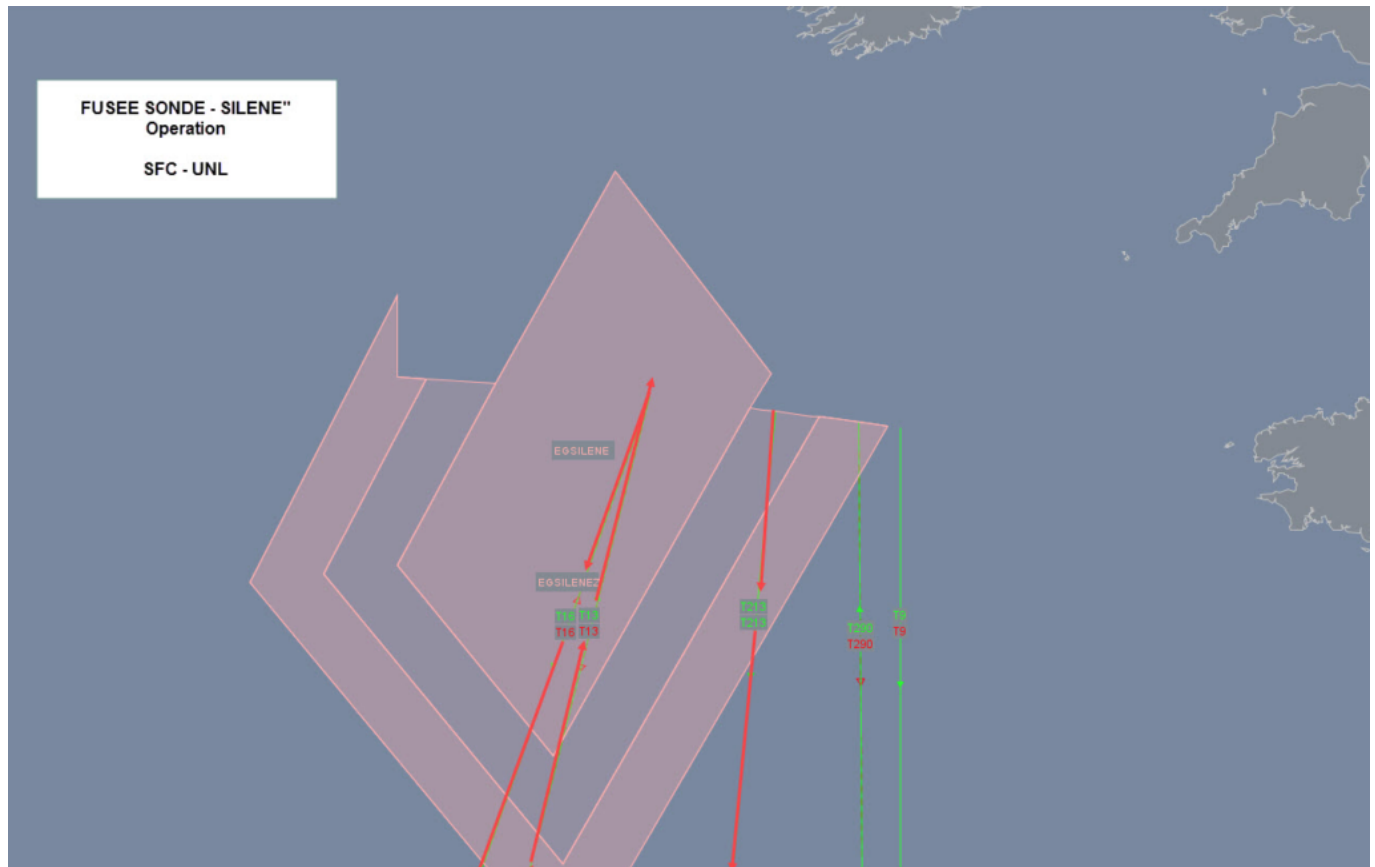
Military exercises are common, particularly across Europe, and **Eurocontrol notifies** of these via its Operations Portal. These often utilise airspace which has some impact on commercial operations.

The airspace closures are advised via Notam and AIP SUP, and where required, alternative routes are advised to ensure flights are not planned through the airspace.

For the remainder of October 2021 the following exercises are planned:

- **LFO 21** in the Sweden FIR/UIR from ground to FL320. Low operational impact is expected.
- **FLOTEX-21** will impact the LECM/Madrid and LECB/Barcelona FIR/UIRs, with low operational impact.
- **Fusee Sonde-Silene 21** will take place in the EISN/Shannon, EGPX/Scottish and EGGX FIRs. Operational impact is still low, however, it affects some routes through the Shanwick Oceanic region.

Flight planners and crew should be aware of these, but generally flight plans which attempt to route through prohibited or restricted airspace will be rejected, and ATC will prevent flights from entering areas during weather avoidance or other route detours.



Tango routes are impacted during the exercise.

What can we do to maintain safety near military zones?

During any operation operators, flight planners and the crew should **remain vigilant in reading Notams and ascertaining which military areas are active**, the altitude of activities and restrictions or prohibitions which might affect their safe routing.

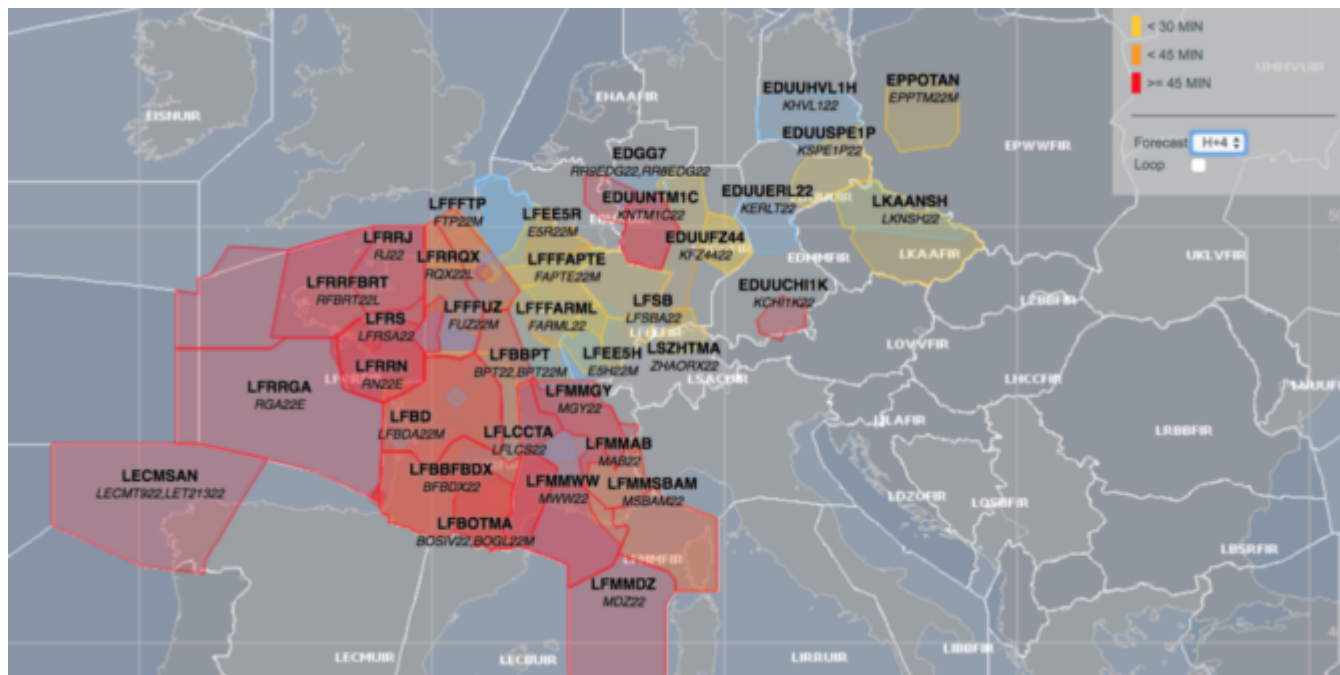
GPS jamming around major military sites is also worth considering.

Safeairspace provides information on conflict zones, and airspace where risks are high for overflying traffic.

North Korea, and certain airways which route close to their airspace and the **Sea of Japan** are worth mentioning because of North Korea's recent number of **un-notified missile tests**.

Nationwide French ATC strike on Jan 9

Declan Selleck
28 October, 2021



This week's nationwide French ATC strike looks to be going ahead as planned. It will run from 1800z on Weds Jan 8, until 0530z on Friday Jan 10; but the worst of the delays will happen during the day on Thurs Jan 9.

At LFBG/Toulouse, airlines have been requested to reduce their scheduled flights by a third from 0500-2300z on Thurs Jan 9; but that's the only airport which has issued this kind of restriction so far.

Eurocontrol's Mitigation Plan can be found here.

We expect this strike will be much the same as the five French ATC strikes we had in December – big delays at the major airports and for overflights, busy Tango Routes with traffic avoiding French airspace in the west, and Algeria/Tunisia will most likely let you fly through their airspace without special permission if you want to avoid French airspace in the south.

For the latter, just make sure to add the right AFTN codes on flight plans! That means – as well as filing your FPL to the normal Eurocontrol addresses, you must also include those for Algeria (DAAAZQZX and DTTCZQZX) and Tunisia (DTTCZQZX and DTTCZRZX) – and make sure these are included for any subsequent DLA messages as well.

For real-time updates of any airspace issues once the strike has started, keep an eye on this handy French ATC webpage: <http://dsnado.canalblog.com/>

And check out our article for everything else you need to know about how to survive French ATC strikes!

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

Cynthia Claros
28 October, 2021

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

ISSUED BY FLIGHT SERVICE BUREAU

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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.

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.

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