

The Doha FIR: Qatar is finally getting its own airspace

OPSGROUP Team
30 August, 2022



For such a small place, Qatar has some big history. It is in the news (and in aviation news) a fair old amount over the past few years.

And now another newsworthy event is occurring, because it is finally

getting

its

own

airspace!

We feel like we should send a house (well, airspace) warming gift? Send us ideas. Or maybe just go and use the airspace.

What's the story?

We posted this back in 2021 when the news first hit the headlines that Qatar was looking to get its own airspace.

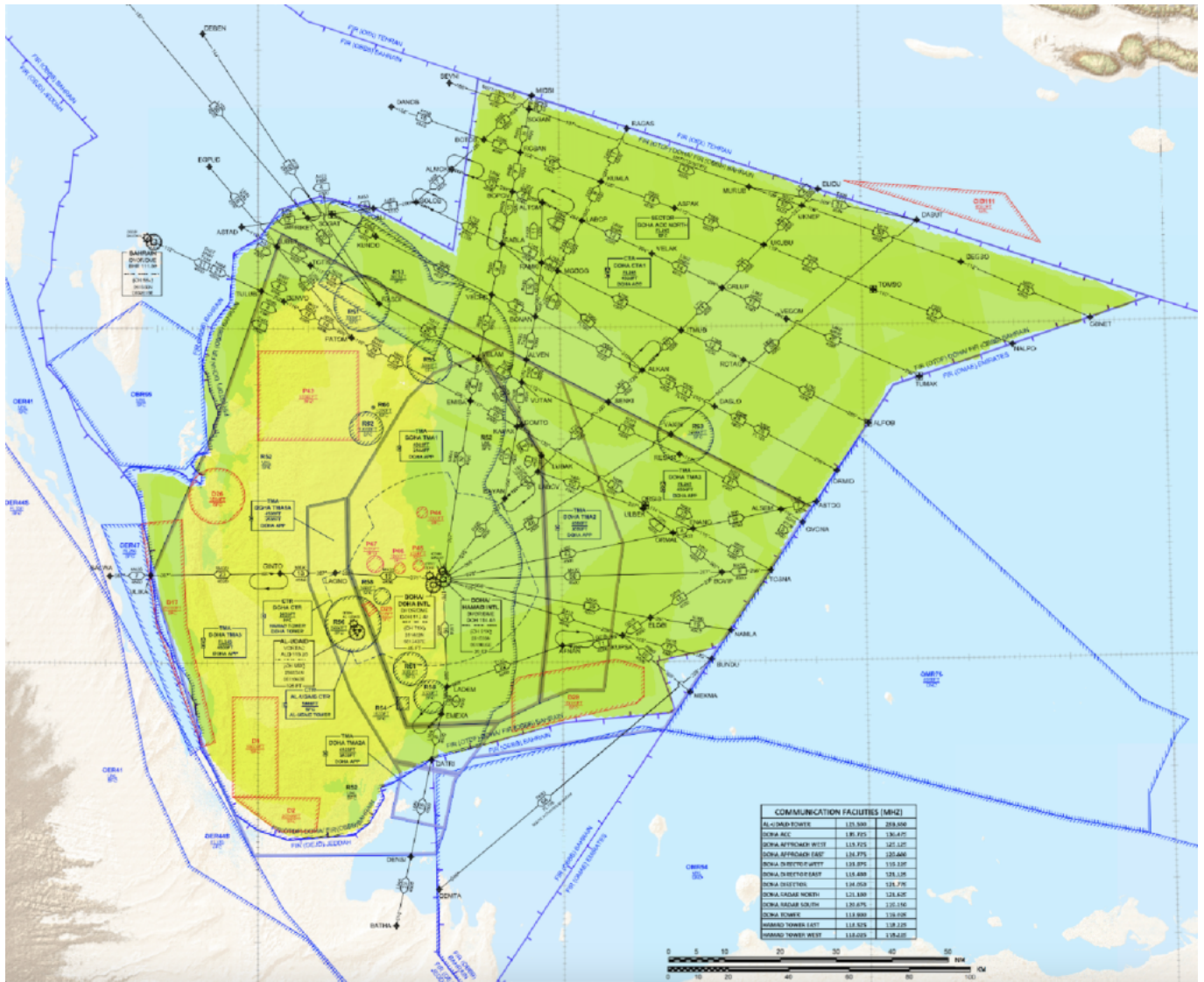
In short, (in case you can't be bothered to click the link and read it), with the exception of the OTHH/Doha terminal area, all the **airspace was controlled by Bahrain**. Which was never a problem until Qatar had a fairly large '*diplomatic dispute*' with many of their neighbours, and it reignited the campaign to get their own airspace.

They pushed the idea, there was some feedback, it wasn't good, so they put in a new proposal fixing the issues, and it was approved.

Now it is actually happening!

The **OTDF/Doha FIR** will be established, effective from **8th September 2022**.

Here is a map of what the **lateral boundaries** look like.



The yellow bits.

If you click here, you'll be transported to a lovely high res PDF fresh from the AIM (and minus the badly done highlighting) so you can see it all much more clearly.

The vertical boundaries will be surface level to FL245, which means flights above FL245 will still be in the Bahrain FIR and under their control. So if you're overflying, you probably aren't going to notice much during **Phase 1**.

You can access all the info on this in the Qatar AIP, available here.

So that's it?

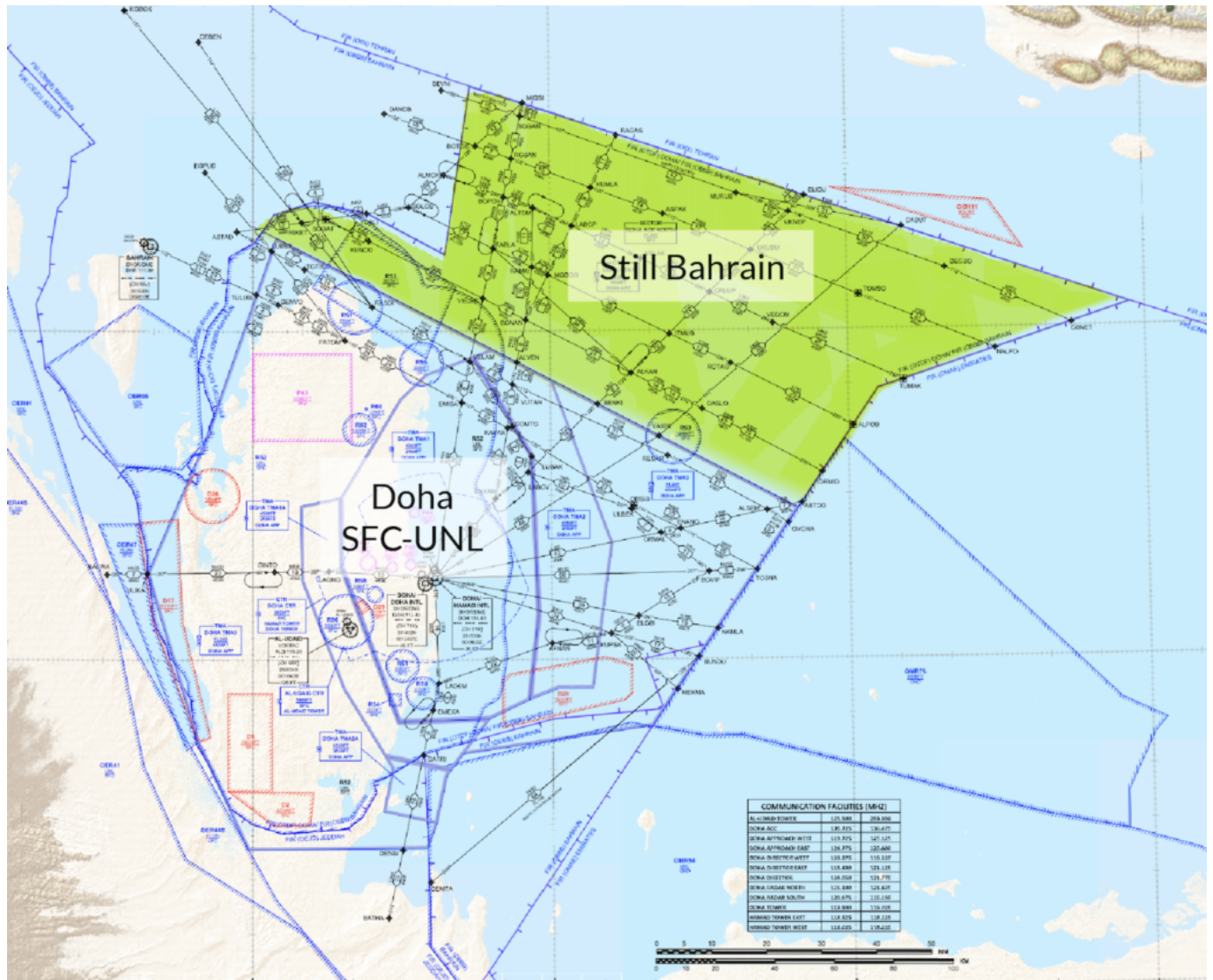
No, that's not it, because there are several phases.

Phase 2 is when Doha Control grabs control of **all the airspace above the State of Qatar and their**

waters. This means surface level to somewhere unlimited above them.

Bahrain will still be responsible for controlling the **international waters bits nearby, but only up to FL245**. Now you might notice the difference if you're overflying, but not much – just some new frequencies to talk to.

This will come in from **23rd March 2023**.



The bit Bahrain maintains.

Finally...

Sometime **after the end of 2024**, Doha will become the 'responsible authority' for the entire FIR, surface level to unlimited, including over the international waters.

What is important to know?

Communications:

Well, initially there won't be much change at all if you're only overflying.

Obviously, if you descend down into Doha then you are going to be speaking to someone not in Bahrain,

but you would have been anyway once you entered the OTHH/Doha terminal area. Now it will just be a little earlier.

There have **never been issues with the handover** between Bahrain and Doha.

Flightplanning:

OTHHZPZX is the current *general* flight plan one.

All flight plans and departures messages for flights planning on operating through or within the Doha FIR must include addresses **OTDFZQZX**

If you're going to overfly on the A453, L602, L768, M600, M677, P559, P699, T308, T872, Y856 ATS Routes (via North of Qatar) then make sure you use **OTBDYWYX** in the message address.

In the absence of AFS, you can email: doha.comm@caa.gov.qa or fax at (974) 4462 1052 / (974) 4470 5075. An acknowledgement of receipt must be obtained via tel (974) 4470 5080 / (974) 4470 5081.

ATC (in general):

Controllers in the Doha TMA were always well trained and a good standard. There is no reason to suspect the new controllers responsible for the FIR won't also be.

Procedures are unlikely to have changed, it will now just be a Dohasian rather than a Bahrainian controller calling the shots.

(No, Dohasian isn't a real name, I made it up).

Weather:

Weather avoidance might require you to talk to both Doha and Bahrain if you'll be crossing the temporary boundary (into the international waters area).

Contingency procedures:

Until the official AIM is published this isn't confirmed, but the assumption is this will remain the same.

It's so small, why do we care?

While the airspace is smallish in the schemes of airspace size, it is biggish in terms of importance for the region. Around over **thirty percent of traffic in and out of the UAE** routes via Bahrain (soon to be Qatari) airspace, Kuwait and then up via Iraq to Europe, avoiding Iranian airspace to the right.

OTHH/Doha and **OKBK/Kuwait** provide two "final" alternates for en-route diversions for aircraft routing over Iraq, and also for aircraft routing south if UAE airspace closes. They are also close to Saudi airspace and useful alternates if ESCAT procedures prevent aircraft from operating into Saudi Arabia.

Anything else?

Not that we can think of, but you can tell us if you experience anything worthy of reporting once it goes live this September.

We did make this Airport Lowdown for OTHH/Doha in case you need it.

The Lowdown on: OTHR/HAMAD <small>OTHR</small>																						
THE BASICS	HOURS: 104 TIMEZONE: UTC+3 PERMITS-SLOTS: YES RUNWAYS: 06/24R 15,943FT / 4850M + 60M 3LS CAT II 06/24L 13,544FT / 4130M + 60M 3LS CAT II FACILITIES: HAULOR MAINTENANCE / HANDLING / FUEL / CUSTOMS / REF 50																					
THE BIG	LOW LEVEL OFF-TURN - MISSED APPROACH HIGH TEMPERATURE OPS/THERMALS																					
THE OPS	ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE: CLOSE PROXIMITY TO OTHER AIRSPACE, STRICT ADHERENCE TO VFR/IL AND AIRSPACE CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED AIRSPACE: LARGE, BUSY AIRPORT, CAUTION TCAS AIRSPACE: RESTRICTED AND PROHIBITED AREAS TO WEST OF AIRPORT HAZARD: MANY COMPLEX MISSED APPROACH ROUTES																					
THE ALTERNATES	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>DUBAI/DMEM</td> <td>05/13R</td> <td>15,465 FT/4710M</td> <td>3LS CAT I - RNP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>05/13L</td> <td>15,465 FT/4710M</td> <td>3LS CAT I - RNP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DOHA/DMM</td> <td>02/16R</td> <td>12,465 FT/3800M</td> <td>3LS CAT I - RNP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>02/16L</td> <td>12,465 FT/3800M</td> <td>3LS CAT I - RNP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>COCHIN/CCM</td> <td>06/14R</td> <td>13,000 FT/3962M</td> <td>3LS CAT I - RNP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>06/14L</td> <td>13,000 FT/3962M</td> <td>3LS CAT I - RNP</td> </tr> </table>	DUBAI/DMEM	05/13R	15,465 FT/4710M	3LS CAT I - RNP	05/13L	15,465 FT/4710M	3LS CAT I - RNP	DOHA/DMM	02/16R	12,465 FT/3800M	3LS CAT I - RNP	02/16L	12,465 FT/3800M	3LS CAT I - RNP	COCHIN/CCM	06/14R	13,000 FT/3962M	3LS CAT I - RNP	06/14L	13,000 FT/3962M	3LS CAT I - RNP
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THE ENVIRONMENT	RAIN: MINIMAL THROUGHOUT YEAR, SOME STORMS OCCASIONALLY WIND: VERY RARELY IBC, MOSTLY CLEAR SKIES, OCCASIONAL SANDSTORMS WIND: PREDOMINANTLY N-W AT NIGHTS TEMPS: HIGHS OF 47C / LOWS OF 12C																					
THE CONTACTS	AIS: 56450 ZL AIRPORT (ADMIN): +974 4330 176 / (OPS CONTROL) +974 4330 3999 HANDLING: GATRA OPER. +974 4333 1764 / gatra@otth.com.qa																					
THE OTHER	PROCEDURES: IT IS ILLEGAL TO BRING ALCOHOL INTO QATAR. CAUTION PRESCRIPTIONS AND OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS CONTAINING CODEINE. CARRY PRESCRIPTIONS WITH YOU.																					