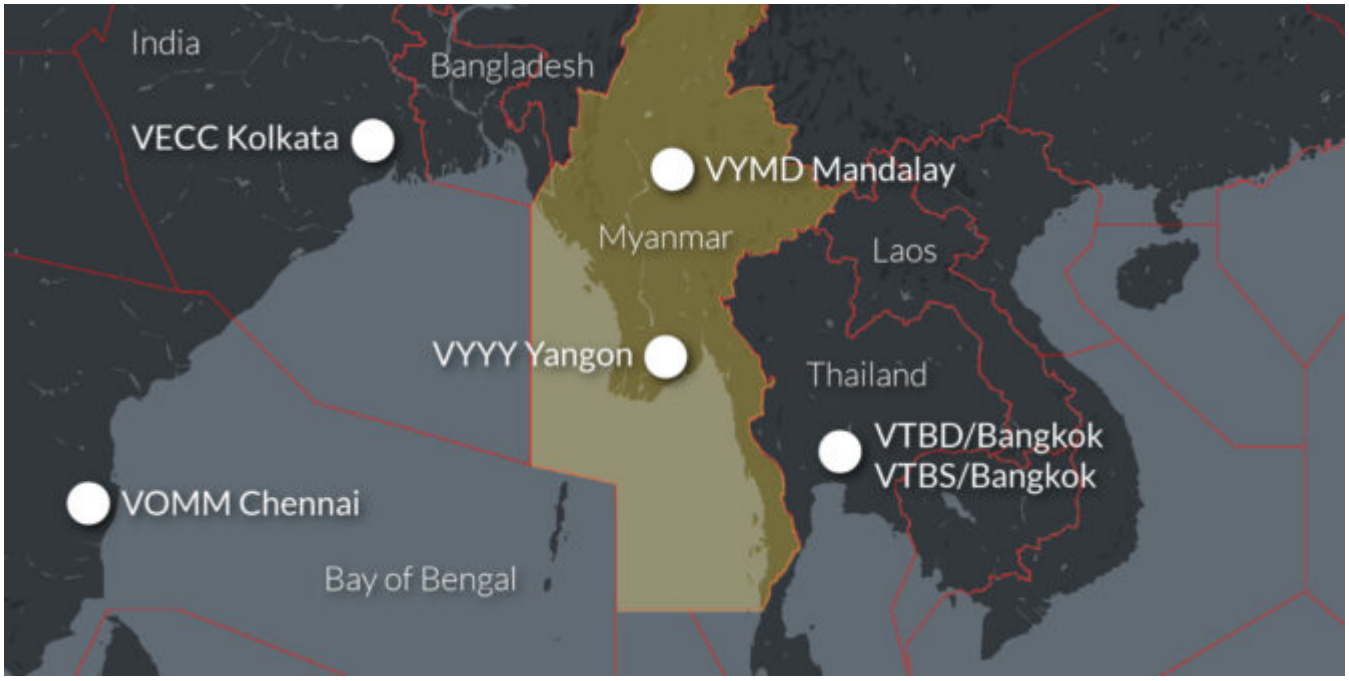
What is going on in Myanmar?

OPSGROUP Team
28 November, 2022



A new airspace warning for Myanmar was issued by Germany on 23 November 2022. EDWW B1361/22 is valid through to February 2023, and looks like this:

> *SECURITY - HAZARDOUS SITUATION IN MYANMAR CIVIL GERMAN AIR OPERATORS ARE ADVISED TO TAKE POTENTIAL RISK INTO ACCOUNT IN THEIR RISK ASSESSMENT AND ROUTING DECISIONS WITHIN FIR YANGON (YYYF) BELOW FL160. POTENTIAL RISK FROM MILITARY OPERATIONS, SURFACE-TO-AIR FIRE AND ANTI-AVIATION WEAPONRY. CREATED: 23 Nov 2022 09:08:00 SOURCE: EUECYIYN*

Take potential risk into account if planning on heading below FL160 in the YYYF/Yangon FIR.

You might not be a German operator, and as far as we know this is the only warning out there.

The UK hasn't issued one. France hasn't issued one. EASA haven't mentioned it, the FAA haven't either... but since Germany has, it is probably worth thinking about (whoever you are) if you operate in any way in the Yangon FIR.

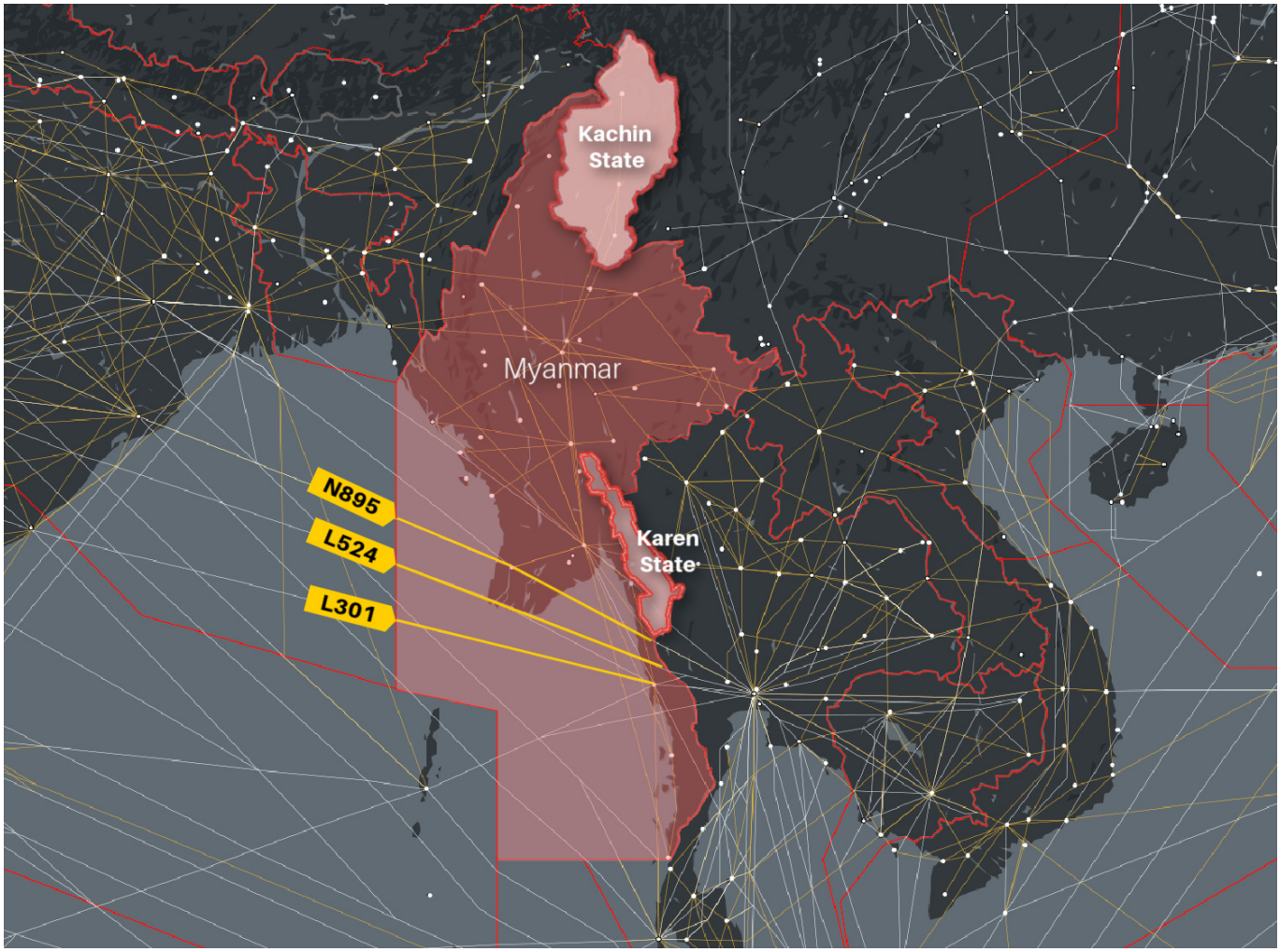
So, what is going on in Myanmar?

Myanmar had a military coup in February 2021. You might remember it because a sudden, significant lack of ATC occurred across their airspace.

We covered that here in a whole lot of detail, but in short: **the majority of ATC and AIS staff went on strike**, leading to contingency procedures (ATC zero) and very limited notams for a while. Since then, ATC and AIS services are back up and running.

But there has been **growing unrest in the country** with increasing numbers of strikes and mass protests by opposition groups. The response has been an **increase in military force resulting in clashes as well as airstrikes** on areas where militia are known to be active.

Security and safety within the country is deteriorating, and **airspace risk is increasing** because of the potential risk from military ops, surface-to-air fire and anti-aviation weaponry.



Passenger injured by bullet.

On Sep 30, 2022, a Myanmar National Airlines passenger was reportedly shot in the face as **bullets passed through the fuselage of the ATR 72 aircraft on approach to VYLK/Loikaw.**

Myanmar's military gave a statement at the time saying the aircraft came under fire at a height of approx 1,000 m about 4 miles north of Loikaw Airport, and blamed the attack on two resistance forces – the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the People's Defence Force. KNPP reportedly said that they were not involved, and avoid civilian targets.

The military are also a concern.

Cambodia recently 'disinvited' Myanmar from attending a major defense meeting involving the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as they wish to *'diplomatically isolate the military regime'.*

This isn't quite 'sanctions level' from Myanmar's neighbours, but it is an indication that the ruling government's method of controlling the situation is not one which is ensuring safety and security in the country.

There are travel warnings in place, including ones from the UK and the US, and the US Embassy issued a new warning on Nov 29 warning of a general increase in violent attacks in the country. **If you do have crew heading in, consider the information in these,** and think how it might impact your crew:

- Security and safety due military response to gatherings and protests is a concern
- Airspace risk due military traffic and airstrikes is a concern

US Sanctions?

The FAA doesn't have an airspace warning, but they do have something, and it can be read here (it's under the FAA prohibitions, restrictions and notices bit).

Re-issued in January 2022, this advisory is from the **OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control)** and it talks about the *"Risks and Considerations for Businesses and Individuals with Exposure to Entities Responsible for Undermining Democratic Processes, Facilitating Corruption, and Committing Human Rights Abuses in Burma."*

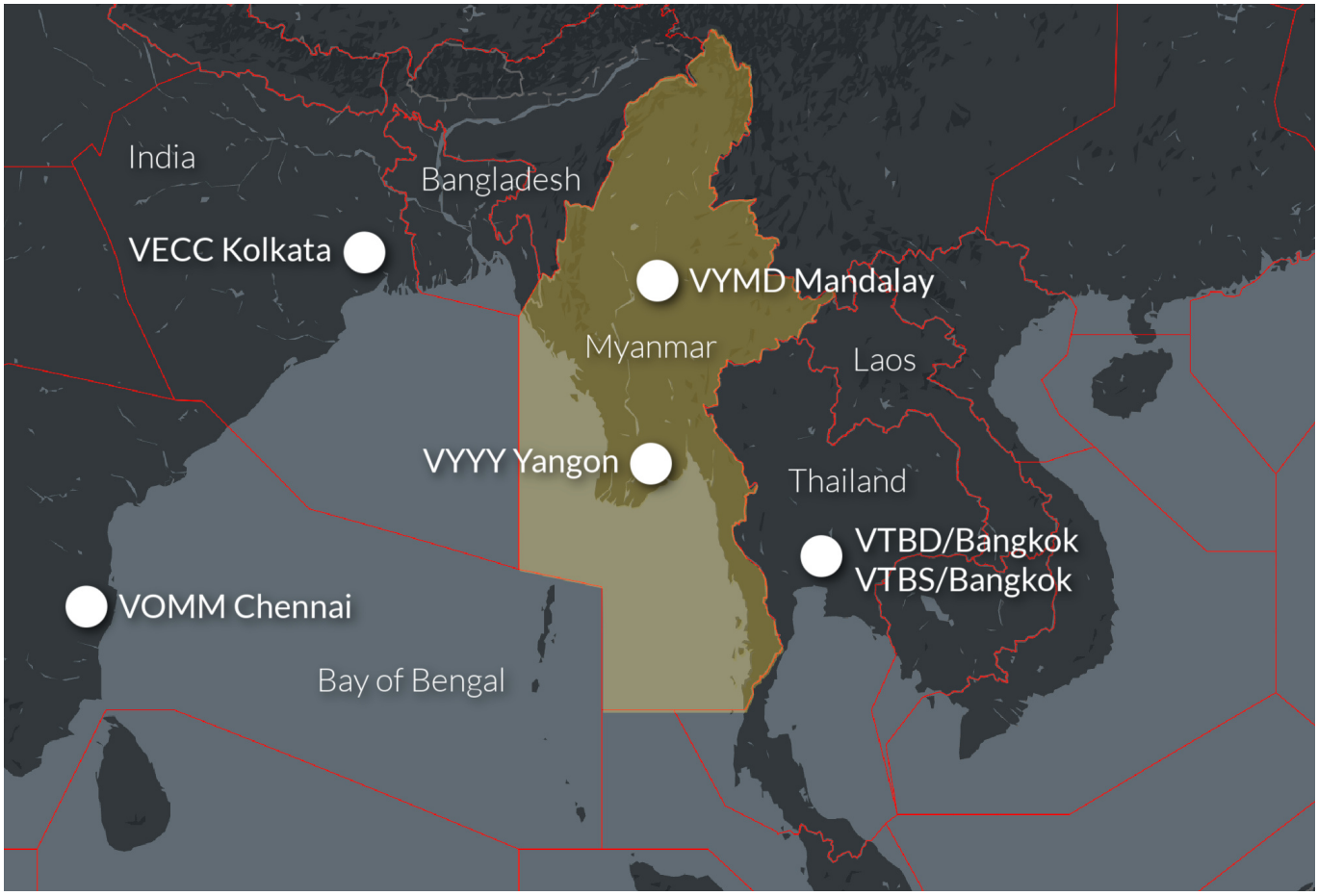
Basically, **be careful doing any sort of business** with anyone there, because if it's with Tatmadaw (that's the military folk) you could get into trouble with the US, or with Tatmadaw (because they're apparently quite corrupt).

Most goods from Myanmar cannot be imported back to the US. While other sanctions have eased off a bit, you can still **run into issues with paying for fees** (overflight permits etc) so using a 3rd party service (that has an OFAC licence) to organise these may prove easier.

Some general considerations.

Here are some general considerations and info, to help you plan:

- **VECC/Kolkata,** India, is a good diversion airport if needed to the west of Myanmar. It has 2 runways, 01/19 L/R and both are over 3000m. There are CAT II/III approaches available.
- **VOMM/Chennai**, India, is a good option if on a more southerly routing. 07/25 is over 3500m and has an ILS. 12/30 is 2800m and RNP only.
- **VTBS/Bangkok Suvarnabhum and VTBD/Bangkok Don Meang,** Thailand, are decent options just to the east of Myanamar. VTBS has 01/19 L/R which are both over 3500m and CAT II. VTBD has 03/21 L/R, over 3000m and CAT II capable.
- More southerly routings will take you across the **Bay of Bengal** and you will only cross a thin sliver of Myanmar land, but the airspace itself continues quite far south. This may be preferable if routing towards Malaysia, Singapore or Indonesia.
    - L301 is mostly offshore, crossing the small sliver of land prior to the Thai border. M770 is offshore, routing SE.
- If routing towards Hanoi, Hong Kong and Taiwan you may find a more northerly routing which crosses central Myanmar is required.



Myanmar airspace and airport considerations.

- **VYYY/Yangon** airport has runway 03/21 which is 3414m, with an ILS CAT I.
    - **MJets are the main FBO** +951 401 590 / +95 978 639 5811 / yangon@mjets.com
    - There were reports of explosions and gunfire at an army checkpoint near VYYY/Yangon airport during protests in 2021
    - There were reports of difficulty uplifting fuel at VYYY/Yangon due to local political restrictions. While this was in 2021, ongoing concerns regarding **military airstrikes against civilians may lead to fuel sanctions** from foreign suppliers, leading to a shortage for civilian aircraft as well.
- **VYMD/Mandalay** airport is an international airport. Runway 17/35 is over 4000m, with an ILS CAT I on 17.
    - There are notams downgrading RFF to 7, and advising the AWOS is u/s.
    - The city itself has seen heavy military action and is considered a security and safety risk on the ground.
- **There is an ADIZ within the Yangon FIR.** You do need to check in in advance with them, and they do sometimes request confirmation of your ADC number.
- **There may be an increase in military traffic.** Caution with radio comms and accurate navigation is important.
- **Weather can be challenging in the entire region**. Consider it in advance in case detours

are required.

- Yangon has **CPDLC (VYYF)** but it isn't compulsory.
- M770, L301 remain offshore. L524 passes over the southern tip. N895 routes across Myanmar.

Last but not least, permits:

- You need a permit for everything here. Takeoff, landing, overflights, and regardless of whether you're private or commercial.
- **Navigation fees have to be paid in advance.** If you have time you can set up an account with the CAA and apply for your permits directly. If not you can use an agent who can pay these on your behalf (and we recommend that). You need to give **five days notice for landing and three days notice** for overfly permits. Here's a handy list from Asia Flight Services for all the prices in the region.
- DCA +95 1 533015 / dgdca@dca.gov.mm
- **Asia Flight Services** +66 2329 5938 / occ@asiaflight.aero

Member Top Tip: *"If you are planning of fly any sort of business jet into Myanmar, be prepared to have a lot of cash (USD preferred). They assume that business jets are full of wealthy individuals and 'expediting fees' are often liberally requested. This is one of those places you don't want to negotiate, just pay and get in the air as soon as possible."*

Member Top TIP: *"Paying in USD is preferred. Some pointers on condition of the notes that will be accepted:*
1. Notes have to be new ones
2. Notes have to be clean, devoid of any writing, marking, stamp, bank seal etc
3. Notes cannot be folded or with creases
4. No hole or tear allowed on the note"