



<b>Airspace Risk Warning</b>	
<b>ETHIOPIA &amp; ERITREA</b>	HAAA FIR (ADDIS) HHAA FIR (ASMARA)

**ISSUED: 17 NOVEMBER 2020**

**TO: OPSGROUP MEMBER AIRCRAFT OPERATORS**

### Notice to Flight Crew and Dispatch

There is a new Conflict Zone in the east of Africa, which carries **elevated risk to operations that may not be obvious** from NOTAMs or other risk warning sources.

Under the SafeAirspace tier system, this airspace is assessed as **Level 2 – Danger Exists**.

### New Conflict Zone – Tigray

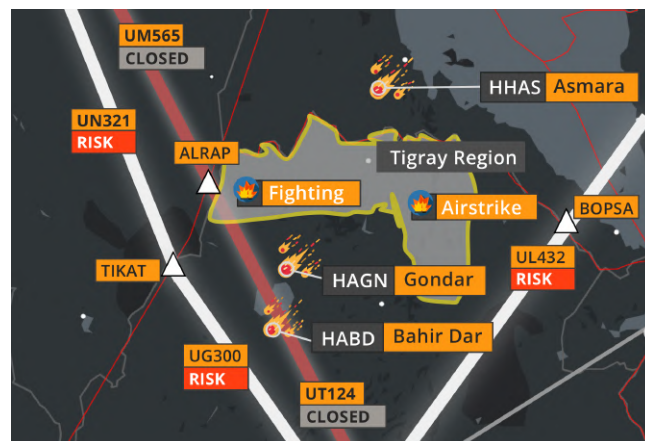
**LEVEL 2 – DANGER EXISTS**

The region being disputed is called Tigray. It's in the north of Ethiopia. Government forces are fighting a regional force that wants independence, called the TPLF. In the past week, there has been heavy fighting, multiple airstrikes, missiles launched, and a growing refugee crisis. **A domestic conflict has become a cross-border war.**

### Danger – Airways near Conflict Zone

Some airways have been closed by the Ethiopian and Sudanese CAAs. Other airways that are still open are very close to the Conflict Zone. **These are frequently used by international operators on the Europe-East Africa route.** In particular:

- UN321
- UG300
- UL432



See full map on following page.

### Guidance

#### Enroute – Overflight:

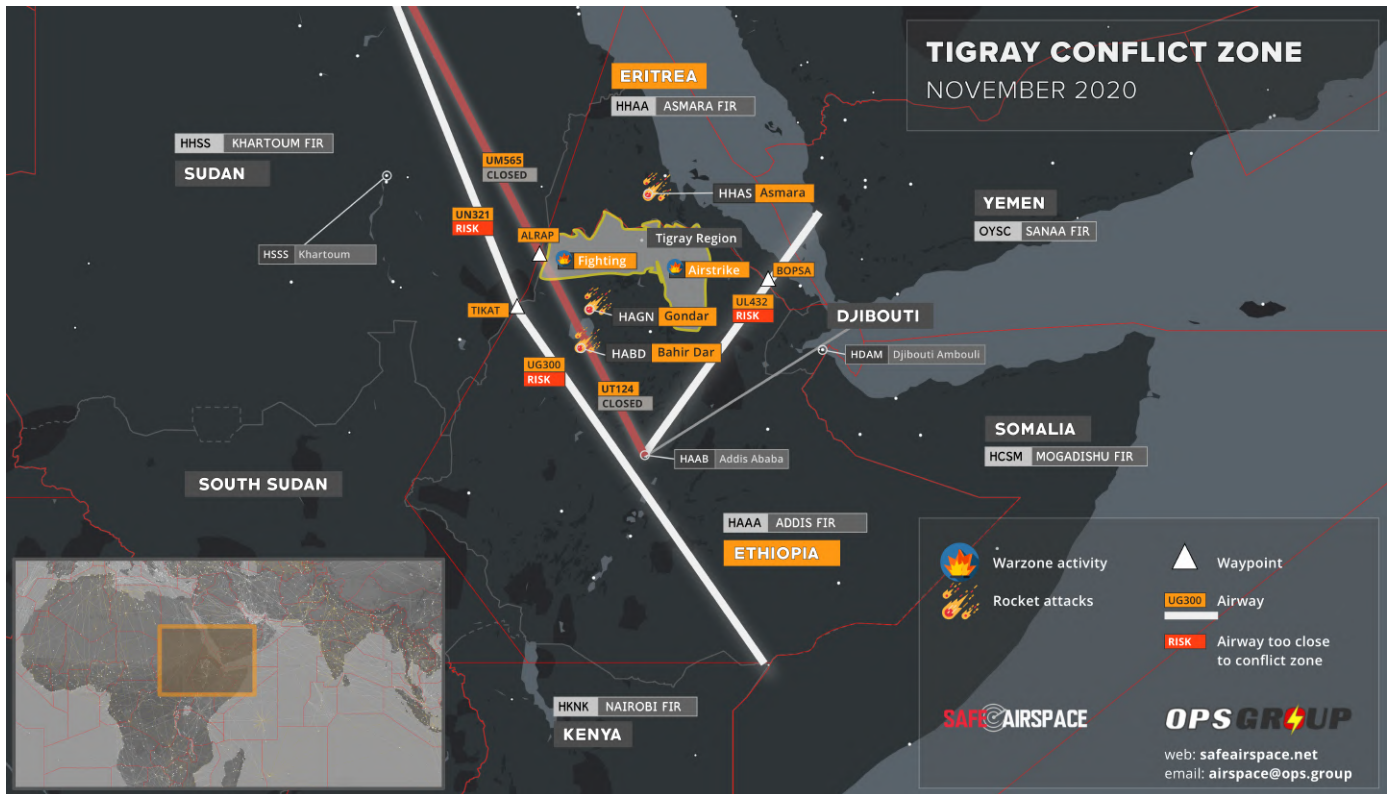
If you're transiting any airspace near or over Ethiopia, Eritrea, or Sudan, take a close look at the map and cross check the airways you are operating on. Several open airways are exceptionally close to the Conflict Zone. **Just because they are open does not mean they are safe.**

#### Landing – Airports:

Airports in the north of Ethiopia, including the Tigray and Amhara regions, are unsafe at present. Many are closed. There have been missile attacks on **HABD/Bahir Dar**, and **HAGN/Gondar**.

**HHAS/Asmara** in Eritrea should be avoided – missile attack on Nov 14, 2020.





Tigray Conflict Zone, Nov 2020. For a higher resolution map, see [ops.group/blog/tigray](https://ops.group/blog/tigray)

## Our Concerns

There are many warning flags that point to previous shutdown incidents – not least MH17 and PS752. These are the reasons we are particularly concerned about the risk to civil aviation in this region:

### Local NOTAMs are misleading

The NOTAMs issued by the Ethiopian CAA to close airways in the conflict zone (UM308, UT124) do not say why they are closed. NOTAMs issued to reroute traffic to adjacent routes (UN321, UL432) do not say why they are rerouted.

The same applies to NOTAMs issued by the Sudan CAA to close airways and reroute traffic. **Flight crews and aircraft operators are therefore not alerted to any conflict in the area by NOTAM.**

### Arbitrary Reroutes

Traffic is being rerouted to other airways by ATC, but it's not clear, or likely, that there has been any risk

assessment. European flights are now using **UN321/UG300**, and **UL432** – all of which come exceptionally close to the conflict zone. As we've learned from MH17 and PS752, just because airspace is open and available, **does not mean it is safe.**

### Previous shutdowns

The Ethiopian Army shot down an Embraer 120 in May 2020, in Somalia. The Ethiopian Air Force shot down a US Learjet in August 1999 in the Eritrean border region. **Both were misidentified.**

### No guidance to operators

No aviation authorities or official sources have issued any guidance or warnings to date via normal channels.

### Rapid Escalation of Conflict

The situation has intensified rapidly, and is extremely unpredictable and unstable. The impact on aviation has not been widely reported.



**SAFEAIRSPACE** Conflict Zone & Risk Database  
All current warnings, in one place

Updates Alerts

Type a country 🔍 Level 1 Level 2 Level 3

**HHZZ / Eritrea** 15-Nov  
Two rockets fired from Northern Ethiopia reportedly hit the country's main airport HHAS/Asmara yesterday, causing unknown damage. Another rocket landed nearby. They were fired by rebelling forces in the neighboring Tigray region. It looks like a deliberate attempt to escalate the conflict beyond borders, as they continue to accuse Eritrea of assisting the Ethiopian Government. There have been threats that similar attacks will continue.

**HAZZ / Ethiopia** 15-Nov  
There has been a major escalation of the conflict in Tigray. Multiple airports have been targeted by rockets. Missiles were fired across the border into Eritrea, targeting HHAS/Asmara. While in Ethiopia, HABD/Bahir Dar and HAGN/Gondar were also attacked (both outside of the main

A current Overflight Risk map is at <https://safeairspace.net>, with a full information library on each country.

## Information Sources

The Conflict Zone & Risk Database at SafeAirspace.net contains all current published warnings and alerts.

The countries that issue the most relevant updates for unsafe airspace are:

- US (FAA) – through Notams and SFARs
- UK (DFT) – by Notam and then AIP
- Germany (BMVI) – by Notam
- France (DGAC) – by AIC

Note: Operators **should not rely** on EASA *Conflict Zone Information Bulletins* (CZIB)'s as a primary source of information. These serve only as pointers to the above sources, and often are not issued until several months after updates, if at all.

Note that **the Civil Aviation Authorities of the countries whose airspace is determined to be unsafe are unlikely to issue reliable guidance.**

## Group effort

This information is compiled from OPSGROUP member input, information, intelligence and analysis. **If you have additional information to share, please send it to [report@safeairspace.net](mailto:report@safeairspace.net).**

**SAFE AIRSPACE .NET** The **Conflict Zone & Risk Database** provides 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. <https://safeairspace.net/>

**OPSGROUP** is a membership organization for Airlines, Aircraft Operators, Pilots and Dispatchers, founded in the wake of the MH17 to promote sharing of information on risk and changes affecting international flight operations.

<https://ops.group/> email: [airspace@ops.group](mailto:airspace@ops.group)

