

# KABUL FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) Bulletin 2021/011

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## KABUL FIR CCT BULLETIN #11

This bulletin issued to provide an update on the ongoing contingency situation in the Kabul FIR. Changes/updates and new information are **highlighted**.

### Summary of changes:

- **UPDATED:** Afghanistan participation in CCT video-conference, and information provided. Several deletions of information on non-contact with Afghanistan.
- **UPDATED:** Limited ATS at Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif
- **UPDATED:** Clarification of the scope of restoration of the Afghanistan NOTAM service. Pakistan assisting Afghanistan.
- **UPDATED:** Clarification of information on potential pop-up departure traffic, and the dependence on Afghanistan agreement to and/or development of contingency procedures.
- **UPDATED:** Information on NOTAM sources and anomalies.
- **UPDATED:** Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 web-page

SITREP at 09 September 2021, 1300 UTC

1. **UPDATED:** ICAO has been informed that officials have been appointed to senior positions in the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority, and relevant Point of Contact details have been provided. ~~However, multiple attempts have not yet established contact. ICAO is continuing efforts to establish contact with the ACAA Officials concerned.~~

Afghanistan participated in the Fourth Video Teleconference of the Kabul FIR CCT, held on 08 September 2021, and informed the meeting that the situation in Afghanistan had stabilized, which would permit better communication with the CCT and other stakeholders. Information was provided by Afghanistan as indicted below, and in the Summary of Discussion (**Attachment A**).

2. ICAO has established contact with officials from Qatar who are coordinating assistance and advice to the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority. Qatar is conducting an assessment of capability and needs, and may provide further information as it becomes available
3. ~~Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority: you are requested to establish and maintain contact with ICAO APAC Office for operational contingency coordination purposes: [apac@icao.int](mailto:apac@icao.int); [ssummer@icao.int](mailto:ssummer@icao.int) (tel/sms: +66 837557504).~~
4. **ENROUTE ATS in the Kabul FIR remains unavailable.** Most flights are avoiding the Kabul FIR.

5. **UPDATED:** ~~Some limited ATS may be available at Kabul airport.~~ A limited TWR service supporting VFR operations for landing and take-off is available at Kabul. Operating hours are 0330 – 1330 UTC.

A Flight Information Service is provided at Mazar-e-Sharif. The scope of this service is not known.

6. **UPDATED:** Afghanistan AIS has **partially** restored the NOTAM Office service. NOTAMs issued on 06 September 2021 are available in the Afghanistan AIS alternative NOTAM webpage: <https://www.afgais.com/>.

Pakistan is kindly providing assistance to Afghanistan for NOTAM distribution.

**SEE CAUTION RE NOTAMS IN PARAGRAPH 15 13, BELOW.**

7. NOTAM Kabul FIR indicates 24 hour prior notification is required for all flights.
8. ICAO has developed **DRAFT** NOTAMs detailing contingency procedures for overflight traffic, and for traffic arriving in, departing from or operating wholly within the Kabul FIR. The proposed contingency arrangements are based on the continued unavailability of ATS in the Kabul FIR, and the requirement for TIBA procedures.

As Points of Contact for Afghanistan CAA have now been provided, the draft NOTAMS have been forwarded to Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority for their consideration and in-principle approval.

The contingency arrangements in the draft NOTAMS will require agreement from neighbouring FIRs, which will be sought following in-principle approval from Afghanistan.

**~~CAUTION: While ICAO continues to reach out to Afghanistan, there has been no meaningful operational coordination in response. All Stakeholders are advised that the situation may change without coordination.~~**

9. Afghanistan has not notified ICAO of the formal activation of its ATM contingency plan. ICAO has not yet received any notification from Afghanistan or neighbouring States of the formal activation of any contingency plan.

The Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan may be accessed at <https://acaa.gov.af/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Afghanistan-ATM-Contingency-Plan-V2.1-APR-2021.pdf>

10. All relevant States are urged to activate any contingency arrangements they may have relating to non-availability of ATS in the Kabul FIR.
11. All potentially affected States, **particularly Bahrain, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and UAE**, are urged to take into account the likelihood of increased non-normal traffic through your FIRs, or traffic operating on other than the usual ATS routes.

12. Related NOTAMs published by the above States should be coordinated with neighbouring States and published at the earliest opportunity where specific ATS routing or other requirements for contingency traffic become necessary (particularly Afghanistan-neighbour States **China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan**), and in accordance with any established contingency plan where applicable.

13. **UPDATED:** It is likely that neighbouring States especially **but not limited to Iran**, Pakistan and Turkmenistan may encounter pop-up departure traffic from OAKB at the FIR boundary. Further consideration is being given to local procedure development, **subject to Afghanistan agreement to proposed contingency procedures and/or development of alternative procedures, and may be the subject of a CCT video teleconference with ANSPs of neighbouring FIRs.**

14. Some traffic has been observed entering/leaving and operating within the Kabul FIR, both by day and by night:

- Flights observed entering and leaving the Kabul FIR to/from:
  - Abu Dhabi, Islamabad, Al Udeid, Doha
- Some UN/WFP operations
- Some military transport operations (Qatar, Turkey)
- Some Domestic flights

*Note 1: periodical observations made using publicly available online flight tracking services. Observation of operating traffic is dependent on the coverage of the sensors contributing to the flight tracking service, and on aircraft transponders operation. There is likely to be other traffic that is not observed.*

*Note 2: No information is available on procedures used by these flights for entry to/exit from or operation within the Kabul FIR.*

15. **UPDATED:** **Some** NOTAM Office (NOF) functions of the Afghanistan AIS have been restored. **Pakistan is assisting Afghanistan in distributing NOTAMS.** New NOTAMS published by Kabul NOF are available on the alternate AIS web-page <https://www.afgais.com>.

However, all stakeholders should note that Afghanistan CAA website has two separate NOTAM pages. **At time of publication of this bulletin the page <http://notam-aaaa.com/> has not been updated.**

**16. UPDATED:** NOTAMs for Kabul FIR (OAKX,) and Kabul International aerodrome (OAKB), have been published on the USA Defense Internet NOTAM Service (DINS, <https://www.notams.faa.gov/dinsQueryWeb/>). **At the time of publication of this bulletin the DINS had not been updated with new Afghanistan NOTAMS. The DINS has now been updated with new Afghanistan NOTAMS, and the NOTAMS previously issued by military agencies prior to 31 August 2021 have been removed**

**There remain a number of NOTAMs in both of the ACAA web portals, and DINS, that have passed their expiry date in Item C and therefore require either review (EST date/time in Item C) or removal (Item C time not EST).**

**CAUTION: ALL STAKEHOLDERS ARE URGED TO CHECK ALL AVAILABLE SOURCES TO VERIFY NOTAM INFORMATION UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

17. Due to changing information being published in NOTAMs ~~in DINS~~ but not coordinated with ICAO or the CCT, snapshots of NOTAMs are no longer attached to CCT Bulletins.

## CCT Video Teleconferences

### **UPDATED:**

#### Schedule of Video Teleconferences:

Commencing 08 September 2021 regular video teleconferences of the Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team will be held each Wednesday at 0830 UTC, until further notice. Additional video teleconferences will be convened as necessitated by events.

#### **ICAO Contact**

ICAO will arrange rotational availability of staff to support, where necessary, 24 hour availability of contingency coordination.

Contact details: Mr. Shane Sumner, [ssumner@icao.int](mailto:ssumner@icao.int), tel. +66 83 755 7504; and  
Mr. Hiroyuki Takata [htakata@icao.int](mailto:htakata@icao.int).

### **UPDATED: Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 Web-Page**

CCT Bulletins, **CCT video-teleconference briefings** and other relevant ATM contingency-related information are now available on a dedicated web-page, accessible through the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office website:

Regional Office website:

<https://www.icao.int/apac/Pages/default.aspx>.

Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 web-page:

<https://www.icao.int/APAC/Meetings/Pages/2021-AFGH-ATM.aspx>.

Distribution of CCT bulletins to all CCT participants by email will continue. Bulletins and other relevant information will be posted to the website at the earliest opportunity during business hours (Bangkok).

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Regards,

ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office



ICAO



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International Civil Aviation Organization

**Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) 2021  
Coordination Meeting 004**

Video Teleconference, 08 September 2021

**KABUL FIR CONTINGENCY COORDINATION TEAM (CCT) 2021**

**COORDINATION MEETING 004**

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Kabul FIR CCT

1.1 The Kabul FIR CCT was formed on circulation of the Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) Bulletin 2021/001 (Bulletin #1) on 16 August 2021.

1.2 Bulletin #1 notified stakeholders that there were reports of major political/government instability in Afghanistan and potentially significant security challenges that airlines, IATA and ICAO considered could disrupt flight operations and/or the provision of ATS and AIS in the Kabul FIR.

1.3 No ATM contingency NOTAMs had been issued by Afghanistan. Information had been received indicating that normal ATS was being provided by Kabul Area Control Centre (ACC).

1.4 Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) did not respond to multiple attempts by ICAO to establish contact and gather information on current and expected ATS capability. The CCT was therefore established, and the following Contingency Plans were circulated as attachments to Bulletin #1:

- *Kabul FIR Air Traffic Management Contingency Plan*; and
- *Inter-Regional Afghanistan Contingency Arrangements*.

1.5 A further nine CCT bulletins have been issued. Four online meetings of the Afghanistan Contingency Coordination Team had been conducted.

Kabul FIR CCT Bulletin #10

1.6 CCT Bulletin #10 issued at 1100 UTC on 07 September 2021 informed stakeholders of the ongoing unavailability of ATS in the Kabul FIR, and provided *inter alia* updated information on:

- Notification received by ICAO of the appointment of officials to the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority;
- Possible limited ATS availability at Kabul aerodrome;
- Requirement for prior notification of flights;
- Draft contingency arrangements for Kabul FIR forwarded to ACAA for consideration;
- Afghanistan AIS NOTAM Office functions had become available;

- Deletion from the bulletin of information on prior-permission required arrangements established by military organizations before 31 August 2021.

#### Video Teleconferences

1.7 A recurring appointment for video-teleconferences to be conducted at 0830 UTC each Wednesday until further notice was sent to all CCT participants.

#### ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office – Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 Web-Page

1.8 CCT bulletins, briefings provided to CCT meetings and other general information relating to Kabul FIR ATM contingency operations were available on the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office website:

ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office website:

<https://www.icao.int/apac/Pages/default.aspx>

Afghanistan ATM Contingency webpage:

<https://www.icao.int/APAC/Meetings/Pages/2021-AFGH-ATM.aspx>

## **2. DISCUSSION OUTCOMES - CCT COORDINATION MEETING #4**

2.1 The CCT Coordination Meeting #4 was convened by video teleconference at 0830 UTC on 08 September 2021. The following States and International Organizations were invited to attend:

Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, India, Iran, Iraq Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE, USA, Uzbekistan, EUROCONTROL, CANSO, IATA, IFATCA, IFALPA, WFP, UN, ICAO APAC, ICAO EUR ICAO MID, ICAO HQ.

2.2 Key States either sharing a FIR boundary with Afghanistan, handling the additional traffic avoiding the Kabul FIR or providing direct support to Afghanistan that did not participate in this meeting included Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. In the case of the States sharing a FIR boundary with Afghanistan, further direct communication would be coordinated by ICAO.

#### Agenda Item 1: Afghanistan Air Navigation Services SITREP

##### *ACAA Briefing*

2.3 Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority participated in the meeting and provided an update on the situation within the Authority and in Afghanistan. Representing Afghanistan were Mr. Hasibullah Soroush, Deputy Minister, ACAA, Mr. Obaid Rashidi, Acting Director Air Traffic Management, and representatives from AIS and ATC including Kabul ACC and Kabul TWR. CNS technical representatives were unavailable as they had higher priority tasks elsewhere.

2.4 Afghanistan informed the meeting that the ATS communication system in Afghanistan was very old, and the security situation had affected VSAT sites supporting en-route ATS communications as technical staff did not have access to repair and maintain them.

2.5 During the evacuation period from 16 August many ACAA facilities located in the Kabul airport had been damaged, demolished or destroyed.

2.6 Qatar was providing direct technical assistance in Afghanistan.

2.7 Communications had been restored in Kabul TWR, and a limited service was being provided to support VFR operations for take-off and landing. A Flight Information Service was provided at Mazar-e-Sharif.

2.8 Afghanistan had sufficient certified ATC staff, but ratings were a challenge. Best efforts were being made to arrange OJT, and build capacity.

*Technical Assistance*

2.9 ICAO also informed the meeting that Qatar had positioned technical assistance in Kabul, and was conducting an assessment to determine current capability and to assist Afghanistan in planning service resumption. Qatar was providing assistance in the ATS, CNS and AIS fields, and would provide further information when it became available. However, noting that Afghanistan was now in a position to participate in CCT activities and communicate directly with ICAO, further information on the status of equipment and services was likely to be provided directly by Afghanistan.

*Afghanistan NOTAMs*

2.10 Noting that the Afghanistan NOF was now functional, the meeting was informed that several new NOTAMs had been published, but the distribution process was not certain. While Afghanistan NOTAMs would normally also become available on the US DINS NOTAM facility, these new NOTAMs were not yet visible there.

2.11 A check with another State that routinely received NOTAMs from Afghanistan prior to 16 August 2021 via normal AFTN distribution revealed that the new NOTAMs had not been received. It was also noted that NOTAMs issued by military agencies before their departure from Afghanistan were still listed in DINS. ICAO was working with the USA (FAA) to resolve the matter.

2.12 ICAO also noted that there were two NOTAM portals in the Afghanistan AIS website, but only one had been updated with the new NOTAMs. There were also a number of NOTAMs issued prior to 16 August 2021 that had passed their expected duration (NOTAM Item C).

2.13 Consequently, ICAO cautioned all stakeholders to check all available sources to verify NOTAM information.

2.14 Pakistan informed the meeting that a request for assistance had been received from Afghanistan AIS, the case was being processed and Pakistan was hopeful of an early resolution. An arrangement would be made to support NOTAM distribution. The meeting acknowledged and thanked Pakistan for their previous and ongoing support.

*Note: A check by ICAO of the DINS facility on 09 September revealed that the abovementioned new NOTAMs had also been issued by Pakistan on behalf of Afghanistan, (A Series NOTAMs, replicating the information in the new G Series NOTAMs published in the Afghanistan AIS website), and had become available in DINS. The NOTAMs issued by the military agencies during the period 16 to 31 August had been removed from DINS.*

*Air Traffic Services*

2.15 En-route ATS remained unavailable in the Kabul FIR.

2.16 Thailand informed the meeting that the ATFM service that was normally provided by Aeronautical Radio of Thailand (AEROTHAI) for overflight traffic for entry to the Kabul FIR daily between 2000 and 2359 UTC, under the BOBCAT scheme, would be temporarily suspended due to lack of demand. There had been zero BOBCAT slot requests from airlines since 16 August. However, the service would be restored on the availability of contingency procedures supporting overflight traffic through the Kabul FIR, or on the restoration of ATS. The configuration of the BOBCAT system could be adapted to account for contingency spacing between flights.

*ICAO Planning – Engagement with ACAA*

2.17 The meeting was informed that the first priority for ICAO engagement with Afghanistan was the establishment of contingency arrangements. These included:

- rationalizing NOTAM information;
- contingency planning for overflights;
- contingency planning for entry/departure flights; and
- availability of instrument flight procedures, noting the unreliability of radio navigation aids due to maintenance and/or power issues.

Agenda Item 2: Current and Expected Security Situation

2.18 Afghanistan informed the meeting that security services had been arranged, the situation was stable, and the security of civil aviation in the Kabul FIR was assured.

Agenda Item 3: Traffic Data and Observations

2.19 The meeting was informed that flights known to be operating in the Kabul FIR included:

- Flights operating on ATS route P500 in accordance with a pre-existing delegation of ATC responsibility to Tajikistan;
- Some domestic flights by Ariana Airlines, Kam Air and other Afghanistan operators;
- One round trip flight per day by Qatar Airlines from Doha to Kabul;
- United Nations/World Food Programme humanitarian relief flights; and
- Qatar military transport flights.

2.20 Afghanistan informed the meeting that all international operations were cargo only, with no passengers being carried. Some domestic flights were passenger-carrying.

2.21 The situation regarding traffic avoiding the Kabul FIR remained unchanged; all affected ANSPs were managing the traffic within existing airspace capacity, ATS routes and ATC procedures.

Agenda Item 4: Contingency Planning and Responses

2.22 Afghanistan informed the meeting of the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan. Contingency procedures for airspace management would be published shortly, based on the Plan. Afghanistan was expecting to publish procedures for overflights within 24 hours. The draft contingency procedure NOTAMs provided by ICAO were acknowledged.

2.23 ICAO informed the meeting that the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan, while published on the ACAA website, was not included or referenced in AIP Afghanistan.. Any implementation of contingency procedures would require their formal publication by NOTAM or AIP Supplement, depending on the lead time available.

2.24 The meeting was provided with an outline of the draft contingency operations NOTAMs provided to Afghanistan. Three draft NOTAMs had been provided; one for overflight traffic, a second for traffic entering/departing or operating wholly within the Kabul FIR, and a third detailing TIBA procedures.

2.25 For overflight traffic, the draft NOTAM identified ATS routes, and the restriction of overflight traffic to standard levels as defined in ICAO Annex 2 but limited to FL300 and above. These elements of contingency planning were drawn from the contingency plan, together with the frequency specified for TIBA.

2.26 The proposed procedure for traffic entering or departing the Kabul FIR, or operating wholly within it, included a restriction to operations not above FL290, two enroute TIBA frequency areas using VHF frequencies drawn from the contingency plan, and separate TIBA frequencies for arrival and departure at four major aerodromes.

2.27 Other selected elements of the draft NOTAMS were:

- Recommendation on navigation specifications;
- Delaying action where necessary for 15 minute spacing of traffic entering the Kabul FIR  
*Note: Delaying action would require close coordination with neighboring FIRs.*
- Requirements for outbound flights to contact the next ACC;
- Operation of SSR transponders, and navigation and anti-collision lights;
- Requirement for off-track climb or descent;
- Requirement for arriving traffic to remain at a vertically separated level not less than 2,000 feet above the MSA until preceding traffic had landed or departing traffic was well clear;
- Pilot responsibility for separation and terrain clearance at all times; and
- The responsibility of pilots and aircraft operators for security and safety assessments.

2.28 The third draft NOTAM detailing TIBA procedures was developed as advised by ICAO Headquarters. The procedures were drawn from Annex 11 Attachment B, supplemented by an additional procedure requiring pilots to broadcast and listen out on relevant TIBA frequencies from 10 minutes prior to takeoff.

2.29 ICAO reminded the meeting that the formal promulgation of contingency procedures was dependent on Afghanistan agreement and coordination with neighboring States. Industry would also need to be consulted on the draft contingency NOTAMS.

2.30 The meeting was also reminded of previous experience in the region, where regionally agreed contingency processes had been unilaterally and without-notice disregarded by States without coordination with neighboring States, the CCT or ICAO. It was noted that the recovery from any level of contingency operation carried significant risk similar to the onset of the contingency condition, and must be managed in a coordinated and methodical manner.

Agenda Item 4: Next CCT Meeting

2.31 A MS Teams invitation had already been circulating for a recurring weekly online meeting of the CCT, to be held each Wednesday at 0830 UTC. Additional meetings would be called as and when required.

2.32 The meeting was reminded to not forward CCT meeting invitations without prior coordination with ICAO Asia/Pacific Office, to ensure the integrity of the meeting and that persons joining the meeting were authorized to do so by their State or organization. A list of CCT focal points would shortly be circulated for update.

**3. REQUIRED ACTIONS:**

1. Coordination between Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and ICAO on contingency planning and procedures;
2. Consultation with Industry (IATA, UN/UN WFP) on contingency planning and procedures;
3. Advance notification to the CCT, and agreement on timelines, for resumption of flights utilizing contingency procedures for operations in the Kabul FIR.

*Note: any party to the CCT identifying additional actions may coordinate through the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office*

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