

Recent EASA statements on aviation safety and security over Iran and Iraq

Wednesday 08/01/2020

In the light of recent events in the Middle East, EASA has contacted European Union National Aviation Authorities to recommend that commercial flight operations over Iraqi airspace be avoided, as a precautionary measure. Some Member States and countries have already released information to this effect to their airlines and several airlines have responded to the risk by adjusting their routings.

This initial recommendation is based on the review of all relevant currently available information. In parallel, EASA is working with the EU Commission and the National Authorities to perform a full assessment of the situation to determine the measures required to ensure the safety of aviation in the region. We continue to monitor the situation closely.

Friday 10/01/2020

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) contacted European Union National Aviation Authorities on Friday afternoon (January 10) to extend its recommendation for limitations of commercial flight operations in parts of the Middle East. Following a meeting of the integrated EU aviation security risk assessment group in Brussels, EASA is now advising against flights below 25,000 feet over Iran in addition to its previous recommendation to avoid overflights of Iraq.

This recommendation is made on the basis of available information on recent events in the region, including the crash of a Ukrainian passenger aircraft near Tehran on January 8th. EASA is working with the EU Commission and the National Authorities on an ongoing basis to assess the situation and determine the measures required to ensure the safety of aviation in the region.

Saturday 11/01/2020

The risk of commercial airline operations over Iran has been re-evaluated by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), in coordination with the European Commission, in light of the statement from Iran that its armed forces accidentally shot down a Ukrainian passenger aircraft shortly after take-off from Tehran's International Airport on January 8.

On the basis of all available information, the recommendation in the current security climate is that overflight of Iran at all altitudes should be avoided until further notice, as a precautionary measure. The recommendation of the Integrated EU Aviation Security Risk Assessment Group to avoid overflights of Iraq at all altitudes remains unchanged.

This is a very dynamic situation and a new assessment will be made with the EU Commission and European Union Member States early next week.

The thoughts of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and its staff are with the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the crash of Ukraine International Airlines flight PS-752.



An agency of the European Union

Postal address: Postfach 10 12 53
50452 Cologne, Germany
Visiting address: Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3
50668 Cologne, Germany

Web: www.easa.europa.eu
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Monday 13/01/2020 (in response to requests about CZIB)

The decisions of the last few days were taken in an extremely dynamic environment. EASA in conjunction with the European Commission took decisions based on all available information and made appropriate recommendations for commercial aviation as a precautionary measure, to ensure the safety of aviation in the region. The FAA's published decision was of course one input to this and was considered along with all other available information.

A new CZIB will be released in due course. The recommendations were circulated to relevant parties in advance of this more formal publication for expediency.

DG HOME, DG MOVE and the European Union Intelligence and Situation Centre together chair the EU aviation security risk assessment group. It is the role of that group to which decide whether to issue a CZIB and to approve the final document.

Wednesday 16/01/2020

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency issued a Conflict Zone Information Bulletin (CZIB) on 16/01/2020, recommending that flights over Iran be avoided at levels lower than 25,000 feet. The CZIB is valid until 16/07/2020 and reflects the conclusions of the EU Integrated Aviation Security Risk Assessment Group, which comprises EASA, the European Commission, European External Action Service and the EU Member States.

The CZIB is based on a deep analysis by the EU Integrated Aviation Security Risk Assessment Group of all available information. It states: "Due to the hazardous security situation, and poor coordination between civil aviation and military operations, there is a risk of misidentification of civil aircraft. Due to the presence of advanced air-defence systems, it is advised to be cautious with the risk associated to civil aviation. The risk to operations is assessed to be HIGH for Flight Levels below 250."

As the situation in Iran is currently very dynamic, a further more restrictive recommendation, issued on 11/01/2020 by EASA and the European Commission, also remains in place. This recommendation states that overflights of Iran at all levels should be avoided until further notice, as a precautionary measure. This recommendation was issued to EU National Aviation Authorities in response to Iran's admission that it had accidentally shot down passenger aircraft PS-752. This recommendation does not have the more formal status or fixed time limitation of a Conflict Zone Information Bulletin and may therefore be adjusted quickly, as appropriate, in response to any new information as it becomes available. EASA continues to monitor the situation closely.

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