

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR 33/21

NOTIFICATIONS ON OVERFLYING CONFLICT ZONES ISSUED BY TRANSPORT CANADA

(Replaces AIC 26/21)

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Minister of Transport (MOT) is responsible for the assessment of specific threats concerning flight operations within the framework of the *Aeronautics Act*. Transport Canada, on behalf of the MOT, monitors the security of flight routes used by passenger aircraft and conducts threat assessments when there are changes in the security situation in these routes.
- 1.2 When it is perceived or assessed the State responsible for managing its airspace is not properly mitigating existing risks to commercial aviation, Transport Canada can issue an airspace notification for a risk area, either informative, advisory or prohibitive in nature, under Section 5.1 of the *Aeronautics Act*. Transport Canada's threat assessment methodology is based on a tiered assessment of threat, as described in Section 3.
- 1.3 Airspace notifications issued by Transport Canada apply to Canadian Air Operators (CAO) and Owners of Aircraft Registered in Canada (OARC), and are intended to inform flight planning and operational decision-making.

2. PUBLICATION

- 2.1 NAV CANADA, the corporation that operates Canada's civil air navigation service, publishes airspace notifications on behalf of the MOT.
- 2.2 The reporting format follows the standards articulated in the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) Annex 15 – Aeronautical Information Services.
- 2.3 **Notice to Airmen (NOTAM):** when information to be distributed is temporary in nature or time-critical, notifications on conflict zones are published via NOTAM. As per Annex 15 (Standard 6.3.2.3 (n)), the notification is to include information that is as specific as possible regarding the nature and extent of threats of that conflict and its consequences for civil aviation. The NOTAM will either be cancelled once its validity ceases to apply, or incorporated into an Aeronautical Information Circular, if the information continues to be valid.
- 2.4 **Aeronautical Information Circular (AIC):** if an airspace notification will remain valid for more than 90 days, it will be issued as, or transferred to, an AIC. The notification contained in the AIC remains valid until the MOT makes a change, based on a new risk assessment of the security situation. If a change is deemed necessary, it will be reflected in the next AIC editorial. If the change needs to be communicated before the publication of the editorial, it will be made via NOTAM, which will be rescinded upon issuance of the AIC editorial.

3. ISSUANCE

3.1 The issuance of airspace notifications for overflying conflict zones is a tiered-based risk system, as described below:

- **Level 1 (INFORMATION)** – Take potential risk information into account in risk assessment and flight planning decisions.
- **Level 2 (RECOMMENDATION)** – Advised to maintain a flight level of X / not to enter the airspace of X country.
- **Level 3 (PROHIBITION)** – Prohibited from entering the airspace of X country.

4. EXEMPTIONS

4.1 Exceptional waivers for prohibitive notifications may be granted upon motivated request to the competent authority.

4.2 The notifications listed below apply without prejudice to emergency measures that the pilot in command may take in case of absolute necessity.

5. INVENTORY OF TRANSPORT CANADA ISSUED NOTIFICATIONS

5.1 Afghanistan – Level 2

As of July 28, 2021, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Afghanistan (Kabul FIR (OAKX)), due to potential risks from extremist and militant activity and limited risk mitigation capabilities. Exempt from this guidance are airways P500 and G500 for transiting overflights at or above flight level 320.

5.2 Belarus – Level 2

As of May 25, 2021, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Belarus (Minsk FIR (UMMV)), due to unusual excessive measures by the Belarusian authorities posing serious safety and security risks to civil aviation operations.

5.3 Iran – Level 2

As of January 10, 2020, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Iran (Tehran FIR (OIIX)), due to the potential risk from heightened military activity and dedicated anti-aviation weaponry in Iran.

5.4 Iraq – Level 2

As of January 10, 2020, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Iraq (Baghdad FIR (ORBB)), due to the potential risk from military activity and anti-aviation weaponry in Iraq.

5.5 Libya – Level 2

As of February 18, 2020, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Libya (Tripoli FIR (HLLL)), due to the hazardous situation created by the expanding conflict in Libya.

5.6 North Korea – Level 1

As of February 9, 2021, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised to exercise extreme caution in the airspace of North Korea (FIR Pyongyang (ZKKP)), due to the potential risk to aviation from ballistic missile launches without prior notice.

5.7 Saudi Arabia – Level 2

As of March 11, 2021, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised to exercise great caution in Saudi airspace (Jeddah FIR (OEJD)), and not to enter the southwest area of OEJD FIR, in which ESCAT (Emergency Security Control of Air Traffic) rules may be activated by NOTAM from the Saudi authorities, due to the hazardous security situation and ongoing military operations in Saudi Arabia.

5.8 Somalia – Level 2

As of February 9, 2021, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised to maintain a flight level equal to or above FL260 within Somali airspace (Mogadishu FIR (HCSM)), due to the presence of terrorist organizations with confirmed anti-aviation weaponry and the presence of ongoing military operations in Somalia.

5.9 Syria – Level 2

As of February 9, 2020, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Syria (Damascus FIR (OSTT)), and to exercise caution when operating in the airspace within 200 NM of the Damascus FIR (OSTT), due to the potential risk from heightened military activity and dedicated anti-aviation weaponry in or around Syria.

5.10 Yemen – Level 2

As of February 9, 2021, and until further notice, Canadian Air Operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada are advised not to enter the airspace of Yemen (Sana'a FIR (OYSC)), northwest of the line created by the waypoints PAKER-ORBAT-NORMA on jet route UT702, due to potential risks from dedicated anti-aviation weaponry and Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems operations.

6. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information, please contact:

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