

# Kabul FIR Updated Information

*Note: This Safety Bulletin represents a rapidly changing situation, updates may be published quickly. The version will be indicated in the numbering of the paper, originally published 17 August 2021.*

IFALPA has received the following information via the Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT):

**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:**

**NEW: Kabul Advisory Service**

**NEW: Observed traffic operating to/from and within Kabul FIR.**

## **SITREP at 24 August 2021, 0800 UTC**

Afghanistan CAA CCT POCs have not responded to ICAO communications. Attempts to establish contact are continuing.

**ENROUTE ATS in the Kabul FIR remains unavailable.** Most flights are avoiding the Kabul FIR.

ICAO was previously informed that the military support services were seeking to establish a procedural arrival/departure **advisory service** in the vicinity of Kabul International Airport (OAKB) to help with civil/military de-confliction and flow to the airport. Establishment of this service will be reported by CCT Bulletin. ICAO has been seeking further information on this matter. No information has been provided to ICAO, however:

**NEW: NOTAM OAKB A0018/21, published in the DINS (see paragraph 14) indicates the availability of 'KABUL ADVISORY SERVICES' within 50 NM of OAKB.**

ICAO was previously informed that Military ATC were providing 'a limited Tower VFR service (no IFR services)' from the alternate control tower on the North side with limited radios and no landline communications. This information has not been updated to ICAO.

Prior Permission Required for operations at Kabul International Airport. NOTAMS refer. Secure ramp space at OAKB is very limited and aircraft are expected to remain on the ground only long enough to embark passengers and depart: **Expect no more than 30 minutes of ground time.** No fuel or services are available.

Due to the requirement to keep arriving/departing aircraft as high as possible, **all flights transiting the Kabul FIR are requested to operate at or above FL300** (request from military services at Kabul)

*Note: Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan also refers.*

*<https://aca.gov.af/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Afghanistan-ATM-Contingency-Plan-V2.1-APR-2021.pdf>*

**Moved:** 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.

**Moved:** All relevant States are urged to activate any contingency arrangements they may have relating to non-availability of ATS in the Kabul FIR.

**Moved:** 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.

**Moved:** 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.

It is likely that neighbouring States especially Pakistan and Turkmenistan may encounter pop-up departure traffic from OAKB at the FIR boundary. Further consideration is being given to local procedure development, *and may be the subject of a CCT video teleconference with ANSPs of neighbouring FIRs.*

**NEW:** 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:

- mostly military aircraft types, but also a small number unknown civil aircraft types operating to/from Kabul. ICAO has no information on the purpose of these flights, but considers they are likely to be evacuation flights;

Flights observed operating in the Kabul FIR:

- Military aircraft types apparently operating on random tracks at various upper levels above F290, and observed up to FL405.

*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.*

Afghanistan AIS is not available. The following contingency-related NOTAM (now overdue for review) remains available on the Afghanistan AIS web portal (<https://www.afgais.com>): (see next page)

(G1264/21 NOTAMN  
Q) OAKX/QAFAM/IV/NBO/E/000/999/  
A) **OAKX** B) 2108160445 C) 2108180445 EST  
E) KABUL AIRSPACE HAS BEEN RELEASED TO THE MILITARY. ADVISE TRANSIT  
AIRCRAFT TO REROUTE.  
ANY TRANSIT THROUGH KABUL AIRSPACE WILL BE UNCONTROLLED.  
SURROUNDING FIRS HAVE BEEN ADVISED.)

All stakeholders are requested to note the information in this NOTAM aligns with NOTAMs provided in the USA DINS.

ICAO currently has no information on the expected continuity of this web-based NOTAM service provided by Afghanistan. The information provided by this service is not updated, and must therefore be treated with appropriate caution.

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/>).

**ALL STAKEHOLDERS ARE URGED TO CHECK BOTH THE AFGHANISTAN AIS PORTAL AND THE DINS SERVICE FOR NOTAM UPDATES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

**UPDATED:** Relevant NOTAMS downloaded from DINS at the time of publication of this bulletin are reproduced in **Attachment A**. 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 Bulletins.

The military organizations managing the Prior Permission Required (PPR) programme for operations Kabul International Airport have emphasized the need for all flights to Kabul to strictly comply with the PPR process **described in NOTAMs OAKB available in DINS** and any subsequent NOTAM that updates the information. Flights that do not comply with the PPR process cannot be accommodated due to limited aircraft parking capacity.

## **Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 Webpage**

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

Regional Office website:

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

Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 webpage:

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

*©2021 The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations. This publication is provided for information purposes only, in all cases pilots should follow their company's guidance and procedures. In the interest of flight safety, reproduction of this publication in whole or in part is encouraged. It may not be offered for sale or used commercially. All reprints must credit IFALPA.*