

Security Concerns in the Papua Region of Indonesia

NOTE

This paper supersedes 23SAB02, a Safety Bulletin of the same name.

BULLETIN

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations (IFALPA) is concerned about the ongoing security issues faced by commercial aircraft and crews operating in the Papua Region of Indonesia, as reported by our local Member Association, Ikatan Pilot Indonesia (IPI).

For several years, armed groups operating in Indonesia's Papua Region, including the West Papua Liberation Army (TPNPB), have reportedly fired at commercial aircraft during operations at local airports. Security incidents have also affected flight crews, including the kidnapping of a foreign pilot.

Since the beginning of 2026, the security situation has deteriorated further. In February 2026, two Smart Air pilots were killed in an attack attributed to an armed group. In July 2026, a PT AMA pilot was fatally shot and the aircraft he was operating was set on fire. Neither flight was associated with government or military operations.

The Indonesian Government has previously designated the Papua Region as a high-security-risk-area. Security incidents involving armed groups continue to occur, particularly in the mountains and remote areas. These incidents have included attacks on aircraft, flight crews, and aerodrome infrastructure, creating an ongoing security risk for civil aviation operations.

Despite government security measures, such incidents continue. Ikatan Pilot Indonesia has been working closely with the Indonesian Air Force to ensure the security of aerodromes in the Region, but this is proving extremely challenging. IFALPA urges the Indonesian Government to take all necessary steps to support IPI's initiatives.

In addition, whilst major operators have already suspended operations into the mountainous and remote Papua Region, IFALPA strongly advises crews continuing to operate in the region to take extra security precautions, carefully assess the risk for each flight, and minimise the time spent on the ground.