

## **FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Venezuela**

Due to ongoing political instability and increasing tensions in Venezuela, the FAA assesses there is an increasing inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operating into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Venezuela at altitudes below Flight Level (FL) 260. As a result, on 22 February 2019, the FAA published Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0001/19, advising U.S. civil aviation to exercise caution during flight operations into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Venezuela at altitudes below FL260.

The FAA is concerned about increased tensions associated with the ongoing political unrest and Venezuela's recent military posturing, which included a national-level military exercise and the blockage of humanitarian aid on the Colombian border. The Maduro regime has publicly threatened to defend its sovereignty from any military aggression and to disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid. This confluence of events presents an increasing potential for miscalculation and/or misidentification of civil aircraft, which represents an inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operations in the territory and airspace of Venezuela.

Venezuelan forces have large stockpiles of advanced man portable air defense systems (MANPADS), and some MANPADS may be capable of engaging aircraft up to 25,000 feet. Although Venezuelan military forces are believed to have no intent to target civil aviation, the political instability and heightened tensions in Venezuela creates a concern for the possible loss of state control of some MANPADS into the hands of potentially violent and unpredictable non-state actors who may have different intent and a lower level of training.

There is also the potential for Venezuela to operate GPS jammers in a leadership force protection role in and around Caracas, particularly in light of the August 2018 unmanned aircraft system (UAS) assassination attempt. Use of GPS jammers for counter-UAS operations may cause inadvertent GPS interference with civil aviation operations in Venezuelan airspace.

The FAA will continue to monitor potential risks to U.S. civil aviation operating the territory and airspace of Venezuela and make adjustments to its advisory for U.S. civil aviation as necessary.

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