

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Middle East Region for Airspace Adjacent to the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR)

There is a risk to U.S. civil aviation operating in the airspace within 200 nautical miles of the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR) due to heightened military activity. Aviation risk concerns may include GPS interference and communications jamming associated with military operations and the potential for possible errant long-range surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) originating from Syrian territory, within the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR), and entering into adjacent airspace. For this reason, on 13 April 2018, the FAA published Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0009/18.

Heightened military activity associated with the Syrian conflict has the potential to spill over into the adjacent airspace managed by neighboring states and eastern portions of the Mediterranean Sea. Military operations may result in the risk of GPS interference, communications jamming, and errant long-range SAMs straying into adjacent airspace within 200 nautical miles of the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR). These activities may inadvertently pose hazards to U.S. civil aviation transiting the region. This concern stems from the Syrian military response to previous airstrikes on 10 February 2018, which included Syrian forces launching long-range SAMs. Some of the Syrian SAMs flew into adjacent airspace and landed in Lebanon and Jordan, according to media reporting. GPS interference and communications jamming in the region may also occur associated with the military activity. Some U.S. air carriers have reported GPS interference in portions of the eastern Mediterranean Sea in the period following the 10 February airstrikes, and the interference may have originated from the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR) as a defensive response.

While there is likely no intention to target U.S. civil aviation, U.S. civil aviation transiting the region could be inadvertently at risk from the military activity if operating within 200 nautical miles of the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR).

U.S. operators are advised to exercise caution if planning to operate in the adjacent airspace within 200 nautical miles of the Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR) during this period of heightened military activity. As a reminder, U.S. civil aviation is prohibited from operating in the entire Damascus Flight Information Region (OSTT FIR), as identified in the FAA Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 114. See 14 CFR § 91.1609. Operators are asked to report any GPS interference, communications jamming, and/or other threat concerns to the FAA at ASH-AXE-CITE-WATCH@FAA.GOV or +1 202-267-3203.

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