

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Egypt Sinai Peninsula Within the Cairo (HECC) Flight Information Region (FIR)

The FAA assesses that U.S. civil aviation operating into, out of, within, or over the Sinai Peninsula within the Cairo (HECC) Flight Information Region (FIR) is at potential risk from hazards associated with extremist activities, which pose a significant risk to the safe operation of U.S. civil aviation. As a result, on 30 March 2015, the FAA published Notice to Airmen FDC 5/9155, which advises U.S. civil aviation to avoid flight operations in the Sinai Peninsula at altitudes below FL260.

International civil air routes that transit the HECC FIR over the Sinai Peninsula and aircraft operating to and from Sinai airports are at risk from potential extremist attacks involving anti-aircraft weapons, to include Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), small arms fire, and indirect fire from mortars and rockets targeting Sinai airports. Some of these weapons have the capability to target aircraft at high altitudes and/or upon approach and departure. The militant group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis (ABM) has previously shot down an Egyptian military helicopter flying at low altitude using MANPADS. Although MANPADS have not been used to target civil aircraft in the Sinai, they could be used to potentially engage civil aviation. Attacks against aircraft in-flight or weapons fire targeting Sinai airports can occur with little or no warning.

The FAA will continually review the situation regarding threats to U.S. civil aviation in the Sinai Peninsula and HECC FIR and make adjustments as necessary to its advisory for U.S. civil aviation operations.

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