

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation - Kenya

Due to cross-border extremist/militant attacks originating in Somalia, risk remains to U.S. civil aviation flying into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Kenya east of 40 degrees east longitude at altitudes below Flight Level (FL) 260. As a result, on 26 Feb 2022, the FAA published Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM) KICZ A0008-22, advising U.S. civil aviation to exercise caution when flying into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Kenya at altitudes below FL260 east of 40 degrees east longitude.

While primarily active in Somalia, al-Shabaab, an al-Qa'ida-affiliated extremist/militant group, is the predominate extremist/militant threat concern in Kenya and has demonstrated its capability and intent to conduct attacks against Kenyan government security forces, civilians, and Western interests in Kenya, including joint civil-military airfields, primarily near Kenya's eastern border with Somalia and in the coastal region of Kenya adjacent to Somalia. The most recent attack on a dual use airfield occurred in January 2020, at Camp Simba, which is co-located with Manda Bay Airport (ICAO: HKLU), and destroyed or damaged multiple aircraft. Al-Shabaab possesses, or has access to, a variety of weapons, including small arms; indirect fire weapons, and anti-aircraft-capable weapons, including man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS). Such weapons could target aircraft at low altitudes, including during the arrival and departure phases of flight, and/or target airports and aircraft on the ground, especially at airfields located east of 40 degrees east longitude. Some MANPADS have the capability to reach a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet.

Despite Kenya's security efforts, al-Shabaab continues present a threat in Kenya. The U.S. Department of State's January 4, 2022 travel advisory for Kenya recommends U.S. travelers to exercise increased caution in Kenya due to, among other things, terrorism. The travel advisory indicates terrorist attacks have occurred with little or no warning, targeting Kenyan and foreign government facilities, tourist locations, transportation hubs, hotels, resorts, markets/shopping malls, and places of worship. Terrorist acts have included armed assaults, suicide operations, bomb/grenade attacks, and kidnappings. Additionally, France and Germany issued a warning regarding the potential for attacks on places often frequented by foreigners in late January 2022.

Al-Shabaab continues to intermittently plan and execute high-profile attacks, with the last high-profile attack occurring in January 2019 on the DusitD2 compound. Al-Shabaab also continued to conduct small-scale attacks against ground-based targets in the Kenya-Somalia border region throughout 2021. In early 2022, the number of attacks in the Kenya-Somalia border region increased, but attackers employed unsophisticated tactics using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and small arms against vehicle convoys and security posts, as evidenced by the late-January attack in the border region of Mandera County in which a road-side bomb killed 13 civilians. Al-Shabaab maintains freedom of movement in the Kenya-Somalia border region and has expressed intent to conduct additional attacks against Kenyan targets in retaliation for Kenya sending troops to Somalia as part of the African Union mission to counter al-Shabaab, and could conduct additional attacks, including against aviation-related targets, with little-to-no warning.

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