

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

Due to the fragile security situation created by ongoing fighting between military forces and extremist/militant groups, the FAA assesses there is continuing risk to U.S. civil aviation operating into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below Flight Level (FL) 260. As a result, on 26 February 2019, the FAA published Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0003/19, advising U.S. civil aviation to exercise caution during flight operations into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below FL260.

International civil air routes transiting Mali's airspace and aircraft operating to and from Malian airports, particularly in the area north of Mopti, are at risk from small arms; indirect fire weapons, such as mortars and rockets; 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 airports and aircraft on the ground. Some extremist/militant groups in Mali are suspected of possessing or having access to MANPADS. Some MANPADS have the capability to reach a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet. Attacks against aircraft in flight and/or Malian airports may occur with little or no warning.

Extremists/militants primarily target United Nations (UN) and Malian forces; however, those forces are often based in close proximity to Malian airports. As a result, attacks against UN and Malian forces present an indirect threat to civil aviation and associated infrastructure at the airports. Extremist/militant groups have demonstrated their intent and capability to conduct both direct and indirect fire attacks, particularly in northern Mali, targeting airports and/or adjacent military camps. In January 2019, extremists/militants attacked a UN military camp in the Kidal region. In April 2018, extremists/militants attacked UN peacekeepers at two bases near the airport in Timbuktu using both indirect fire weapons and vehicle-borne improvised devices (VBIED). In January 2018, extremists/militants attacked Malian forces in Timbuktu. Additionally, in mid-January 2017 and late-November 2016, extremists/militants conducted VBIED attacks against, or in close proximity to, Gao Airport (GAGO) and rocket attacks against Timbuktu Airport (GATB). In mid-February 2016, extremists/militants employed rockets, small arms fire, and a truck bomb in an attack targeting the UN base in Kidal.

Southern Mali has been subjected to lower levels of violence. However, terrorism targeting U.S. or Western interests has occasionally occurred in Bamako. In November 2015, transnational terrorists affiliated with al-Qa'ida attacked the Radisson hotel in Bamako, resulting in the deaths of 20 people, including six crew members of a non-U.S. operator.

The FAA will continue to review the situation regarding threats to U.S. civil aviation operating in the territory and airspace of Mali and make adjustments to its advisory for U.S. civil aviation as necessary.

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