

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Overwater Area of the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX) above the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman

Due to the increased political tensions and heightened military activity in the region, including the 19 June 2019 Iranian shoot down of a U.S. unmanned aircraft system (UAS), there is significant inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operating in the overwater area of the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX) above the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. As a result, on 20 June 2019, the FAA issued KICZ Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) A0019/19, prohibiting U.S. civil flight operations in the overwater area of the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX) above the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

On 19 June, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) elements shot down a U.S. military Global Hawk UAS operating in airspace over the Gulf of Oman with a surface-to-air missile (SAM) system. The successful intercept of the UAS follows the 13 June failed intercept attempt of a U.S. UAS flying observation over the damaged oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman. Iran possesses a wide variety of anti-aircraft-capable weapons, including surface-to-air missile systems (SAMs), man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), and fighter aircraft that are capable of conducting aircraft interception operations. Some of Iran's anti-aircraft-capable weapons have ranges encompassing heavily used international air routes over the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Additionally, Iran recently conducted a military exercise in the region, demonstrating their unmanned aircraft system (UAS) capabilities. Although, Iran likely has no intention to target civil aircraft, the FAA determined the presence and demonstrated use of long-range, advanced anti-aircraft-capable weapons during heightened tensions and in close proximity to heavily traveled international air routes poses an unacceptable risk that U.S. civil flights in the overwater areas of the Tehran FIR (OIIX) above the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. U.S. civil aviation operations may become victims of miscalculation or may be misidentified and inadvertently engaged. There is also the potential for Iran to increase their use of Global Positioning System (GPS) jammers and other communication jamming capabilities, which may affect U.S. civil aviation operating in overwater airspace over the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

KICZ NOTAM A0019/19 is in addition to and does not replace the FAA's previously issued flight advisory NOTAMs for all overwater airspace above the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman (KICZ NOTAM A0015/19) and the entire Tehran FIR (OIIX) (KICZ NOTAM A0016/18). The FAA will continue to monitor the risk environment for U.S. civil aviation operating in the region and make adjustments, as necessary, to safeguard U.S. civil aviation.

Posted: 26 Jun 2019