

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

Due to cross-border extremist/militant activity originating in Somalia, there is a risk to U.S. civil aviation operating 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 February 26, 2018, the FAA published Notice to Airmen KICZ A0003/18 advising U.S. civil aviation to exercise caution when flying into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Kenya east of 40 degrees east longitude at altitudes below FL260.

While primarily active in Somalia, al-Shabaab, an al-Qa'ida-affiliated extremist/militant group, is the predominate extremist/militant concern in Kenya and has demonstrated their capability and intent to conduct attacks targeting Kenyan government security forces, civilians, and Western interests in Kenya, primarily near Kenya's eastern border with Somalia and in the coastal region of Kenya adjacent to Somalia. Al-Shabaab possesses, or has access to, a variety of weapons and could employ those weapons in areas where al-Shabaab elements operate. Such weapons include: small arms; indirect fire weapons, such as mortars and rockets; and anti-aircraft-capable weapons, including man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS). Anti-aircraft-capable weapons could target aircraft at low altitudes, including during the arrival and departure phases of flight, and other weapons could target airports and aircraft on the ground. Some MANPADS have the capability to reach a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet. Al-Shabaab has previously demonstrated the capability and intent to use MANPADS against civil aviation.

The U.S. Government assesses that the Government of Kenya's counterterrorism focus since early 2015 has likely degraded al-Shabaab's ability to conduct high-profile attacks against hard targets outside of eastern Kenya in the Kenya-Somalia border region and the coastal region of Kenya adjacent to Somalia. In 2017, al-Shabaab conducted several small-scale attacks against ground-based targets in eastern Kenya in the Kenya-Somalia border region, resulting in limited casualties. Al-Shabaab's recent attack pattern in eastern Kenya in the Kenya-Somalia border region represents a reduced risk to U.S. civil aviation operations outside of eastern Kenya in the Kenya-Somalia border region and in the coastal region of Kenya adjacent to Somalia.

Due to continued concerns over the risk to U.S. civil aviation in eastern Kenya in the Kenya-Somalia border region and the coastal region of Kenya adjacent to Somalia, areas in which al-Shabaab continues to operate, U.S. operators and airmen are advised to exercise caution when operating into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Kenya east of 40 degrees east longitude at altitudes below FL260. Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (HKJK) and Moi International (HKMO) are not within the area covered by the flight advisory.

Despite the reduction in al-Shabaab's capability to operate in Kenya outside of eastern Kenya in the Kenya-Somalia border region and the coastal region of Kenya adjacent to Somalia, there is a residual risk to U.S. civil aviation from extremist/militant activity in the rest of Kenya. Operators should conduct their own risk assessments before conducting flight operations.

Al-Shabaab has made media statements reflecting their intent to conduct terror attacks in retaliation for Kenya's counter-terrorism operations in Somalia, which Kenya conducts as part of the African Union Mission. In January 2014, al-Shabaab demonstrated their capability and intent to target civil aviation interests in Kenya when operatives attempted an improvised explosive device (IED) bombing

outside of the terminal at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (HJKJ) in Nairobi. In neighboring Somalia, al-Shabaab has conducted multiple attacks targeting civil aviation flights and infrastructure, including ground assaults on Mogadishu International Airport (HCMM) and weapons fire against military and civil aircraft operating at low altitudes. Al-Shabaab maintains the capability to develop concealed IEDs and has demonstrated the intent to use them against civil aviation. In February 2016, Al Shabaab targeted Daallo Airlines Flight 159, a flight departing Somalia, through the use of an insider who smuggled a concealed IED onto the aircraft.

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