

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

Due to a fragile security situation created by ongoing fighting between military forces and extremist/militant groups, FAA assesses that there is continued risk to U.S. civil aviation operating into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below FL260. As a result, on 26 February 2018, the FAA published Notice to Airmen KICZ A0005/18, advising U.S. civil aviation to use caution during flight operations into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below FL260.

International civil air routes that transit 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 to possess or have access to MANPADS, which may have originated from the conflict in Libya. Some MANPADS have the capability to reach a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet. Anti-aircraft capable weapons may be used to target aircraft in the low altitude approach and departure phases of flight. Attacks against aircraft in flight and/or Malian airports may occur with little or no warning.

Militant groups have demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct both direct and indirect fire attacks on Malian airports, particularly in northern Mali, targeting airports and/or adjacent military camps. As an example of extremist/militant activity attacking facilities in close proximity to airports, in January 2018, extremists attacked Malian forces in Timbuktu, killing up to 14 soldiers. Militants continue targeting United Nations and Malian forces, often based in close proximity to Malian airports, presenting a collateral threat to aviation assets and associated infrastructure. In January 2017 and November 2016, extremists conducted vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks against facilities located at, or in proximity to, the Gao Airport (GAGO) and rocket attacks against Timbuktu Airport (GATB). In February 2016, extremists employed rockets, small arms fire, and a truck bomb driven by a suicide operative in an attack targeting the United Nations base in Kidal, killing seven people and wounding 30 others.

Southern Mali has been subjected to less frequent incidents of violence. 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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