

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation in the Republic of Iraq

The FAA has determined that U.S. civil aviation operating within the Baghdad (ORBB) Flight Information Region (FIR) is at potential risk from hazards associated with ongoing combat operations involving military forces (military aerial combat operations and other military-related activity) and militant groups. The armed conflict spans a large area of Iraq, which creates a significant risk to U.S. civil aviation. As a result, on 24 December 2014, the FAA published Notice to Airmen FDC 4/2185, which prohibited U.S. civil flight operations in the ORBB FIR at all altitudes.

International civil air routes that transit Iraqi airspace and aircraft operating to and from Iraqi airports are at risk from anti-aircraft weapons, including Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), small arms fire, and indirect fire from mortars and/or rockets. Some of these weapons have the capability to target aircraft at higher altitudes and/or upon approach and departure. Anti-Government of Iraq militant groups, possibly including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, have used anti-aircraft weapons to fire at Iraqi military aircraft flying at low altitude.

Attacks against aircraft in-flight or Iraqi airports can occur with little or no warning. In January 2015, a foreign carriers' aircraft flying into Baghdad International Airport (ORBI) was fired upon by small arms fire and sustained damage during approach. Some Iraqi military aircraft have received damage by anti-aircraft fire, while other Iraqi military aircraft have reportedly been shot down.

The FAA will continually review the situation regarding threats to U.S. civil aviation in the ORBB FIR and make adjustments, as necessary, to its prohibition on U.S. civil aviation operations.

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