

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation in the Territory and Airspace of Pakistan

There are continuing risks to U.S. civil aviation operating in the territory and airspace of Pakistan, particularly for aircraft on the ground and aircraft operating at low altitudes, including during the arrival and departure phases of flight, from various extremist/militant groups. For this reason, on 30 Dec 2017, the FAA published Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0033/17, advising U.S. civil aviation to exercise caution when operating into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Pakistan. With the ongoing presence of extremist/militant elements operating in Pakistan, there is continued risk to U.S. civil aviation from small-arms fire, complex attacks against airports, indirect weapons fire, and anti-aircraft fire, any of which could occur with little or no warning.

Between 2014 and 2017, extremist groups operating in Pakistan, have continued to pose a hazard to civil aviation by targeting airports and demonstrating their ongoing capability and intent to target civil aviation through multiple attacks. In July 2017, media sources reported on extremists' intent to conduct attacks at Jinnah International Airport (OPKC), in Karachi. In 2015, extremists/militants attacked two remote airfields in Baluchistan Province and one Pakistani Air Force Base in Peshawar, resulting in a number of deaths and injuries. In an August 2015 attack on Jiwani International Airport (OPJI), extremists/militants destroyed an air traffic control radar facility, and in June 2014, extremists/militants attacked Jinnah International Airport (OPKC), resulting in over 30 deaths and damage to airport facilities. During several separate incidents in 2014, aircraft on approach into Peshawar's Bacha Khan International Airport (OPPS) were fired on by small arms, which resulted in one fatality.

Additionally, cross-border tensions in the Kashmir region can escalate with little or no warning and may result in temporary airspace restrictions being issued by the air navigation service providers responsible for managing that airspace.

While, to date, there have been no reports of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) being used against civil aviation in the territory and airspace of Pakistan, some extremist/militant groups operating in Pakistan are suspected of having access to MANPADS. As a result, there is a potential risk for extremists/militants to target civil aviation with MANPADS. Some MANPADS are capable of reaching a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet above ground level.

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