

## **FAA Background Information Regarding US Civil Aviation in the Baghdad (ORBB) Flight Information Region**

There is continued risk to U.S. civil aviation operating at altitudes below Flight Level 260 (FL260) in the Baghdad (ORBB) Flight Information Region (FIR) due to the potential for fighting in certain areas of Iraq and ongoing concerns about the extremist/militant threat to U.S. civil aviation. For this reason, on 9 Dec 2017, the FAA published Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0025/17, prohibiting U.S. civil aviation from operating in the Baghdad (ORBB) FIR at altitudes below FL260, with certain limited exceptions stated in the NOTAM.

The FAA continues to assess the situation in the Baghdad (ORBB) FIR as being hazardous for U.S. civil aviation at altitudes below FL260. The risk to U.S. civil aviation originates from the potential for fighting in certain areas of northern and western Iraq between the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS), other extremist elements, Iraqi security forces and other elements. ISIS and other extremist/militant elements are known to possess a variety of anti-aircraft-capable weapons, to include man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), and have fired on military aircraft during combat operations in Iraq. This presents a continued risk of anti-aircraft fire to civil aircraft, particularly in areas where fighting may occur. There is also a risk of potential hostile activity by ISIS elements or other anti-U.S. militants/extremists elsewhere in Iraq.

However, conditions in Iraq have improved, as the coalition of Iraqi security forces, allied nations, and supporting militia elements have successfully reduced the area under ISIS control. In addition, the operational anti-aircraft-capable weapons possessed by ISIS or other anti-U.S. extremist/militant elements are altitude-limited and would not pose a risk to U.S. civil aviation overflights at or above FL260, provided that they remain clear of areas where fighting is likely to occur or re-emerge.

The FAA will continue to actively monitor the situation and evaluate the extent to which U.S. civil operators may be able to safely operate in the Baghdad (ORBB) FIR.

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