



International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG ATM/AIM/SAR Sub-Group

Thirteenth Meeting (ATM/AIM/SAR SG/13)
(Cairo, Egypt, 30 September – 3 October 2013)

Agenda Item 5: RVSM Operations and Monitoring Activities in the MID Region

OUTCOME OF THE MID RVSM SCRUTINY GROUP THIRD MEETING

(Presented by MIDRMA)

SUMMARY

The aim of this working paper is to brief the ATM/AIM/SAR SG meeting of the outcome of the MID RVSM Scrutiny Group Third Meeting.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCES

– MID RVSM SMR 2012

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The main goal of establishing the MID RVSM Scrutiny Group is to examine possible reports of large height deviations by the MIDRMA Member States in their FIRs with the objective of determining which reports from those are influence in the risk of collision associated with application of RVSM according to ICAO Doc. 9574, Manual on Implementation of a 300 m (1000 ft.) Vertical Separation Minimum between FL 290 and FL 410 Inclusive.

1.2 The Scrutiny Group and the MIDRMA investigate Large Height Deviations (LHD), defined as more than 300ft or greater within the band FL290-FL410 in the involved airspaces, which is an essential element of the safety monitoring assessment. The events are usually the result of ATC loop errors, such as, flight crew errors in executing ATC clearances, controller errors in granting conflict-free clearances, instances where a controller fails to capture an inaccurate read-back of a clearance, level busts (overshoot or undershoot), turbulence, emergencies, errors in coordination, weather complications, or responses to a TCAS resolution advisory.

1.3 The Third Meeting of the MID RVSM Scrutiny Group convened on 16th December 2012 in Kuwait, back to back with MIDRMA Board 12 Meeting (17-19 December 2012) and was attended by representatives from 5 Member States ONLY (Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia) , the meeting was monitored by ICAO MID Office and chaired by the MIDRMA.

1.4 The MIDRMA would like to comment in the low level of participants engagement in all Scrutiny Group (SG) Meetings especially the Third Meeting, this is a serious problem because the Scrutiny Group will not be able to receive explanations from the absent States involved in contributing large height deviation reports so that adverse trends can be identified by the meeting and remedial actions can be taken to ensure that risk due to operational errors will not be increased and can be reduced or eliminated.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The MIDRMA presented to the Scrutiny Group all Coordination Failure Reports (CFRs) and Large Height Deviation Reports (LHDs) received from all MIDRMA member states during the period of 1st May 2012 until 30th November 2012. The MIDRMA validated and endorsed the rest of the reports received for the remaining reporting period until 30th November 2013. A total of 55 LHDs and CFRs contributed in the risk analysis. The Scrutiny Group observed that the extreme majority of the LHDs and CFRs were reports of the transferring units fail to coordinate their traffic to the accepting units, the participants analyzed the reports and discussed their impact on the implementation of RVSM in the Middle East region and determined parameter values necessary for the collision risk estimation.

2.2 The MIDRMA continued to raise their serious concern for the third consecutive Scrutiny Group Meeting concerning the lack of reporting Large Height Deviations and Coordination Failures by some of the MIDRMA Member States, the MIDRMA did not see any improvement in the level of reporting by some Member States since 2007, the Final Conclusions of the evaluated reports have been severely limited by the continued NIL reporting of Large Height Deviations (LHDs) and Coordination Failure Reports (CFRs) which does not support a high confidence in the results of the Safety Monitoring Report.

2.3 The LHD and CFR occurrences in the MID Region airspace are summarized as follows:

- a) Total number of LHDs received was 102 – (Only 27 were categorized as relevant for the report) deviation period = 24.1minutes.
- b) Total number of CFRs received was 686 (28 were categorized as LHDs) = 22.78 minutes.

2.4 From 01st May 2012 until 30th August 2013 there have been a total of 46.88 minutes of Altitude Deviation occurrences.

2.5 The Scrutiny Group and the MIDRMA validated all essential LHDs and some CFRs which have a direct impact on the RVSM operations within the Middle East Region. The following observations were addressed and discussed during the meeting:

- 1- Bahrain continued to score the highest volume of traffic in the Middle East Region according to the submitted traffic data used for the SMR 2013, and the traffic situation in the airspace from North of the Qatari Peninsula to the North of Dammam continued to be the most congested and complex airspace in the Middle East Region. The FIR boundary waypoint BALUS between Bahrain and Emirates FIRs (which does not exist anymore), scored the highest volume of traffic. The MIDRMA would like to extend their deep gratitude and appreciation to Bahrain and Emirates ATC Units for their response to resolve the traffic congestion at position BALUS and for the effective coordination and team work between the two units which resulted the implementation of the new RNAV1 airways between the two FIRs and facilitated the transit of Westbound traffic entering the Bahrain FIR from the Emirates FIR.
- 2- Bahrain submitted 5 LHDs and 201 CFRs to the MIDRMA during the SMR 2103 reporting period. The extreme majority of the CFRs received from Bahrain were concentrated at waypoints BALUS, DETKO, RABAP, GIBUS, TAGSO and ULOVO also several CFRs reported in the Southern sector, where a FLAS is implemented, these CFRs required a careful evaluation by the Scrutiny Group due to their serious impact on RVSM implementation. The MIDRMA consider the level of reporting by Bahrain is Satisfactory.

- 3- The Scrutiny Group discussed the reports received from Egypt and noticed a sharp decrease in the number of the submitted CFRs and LHDs during the reporting period of the SMR 2013, only few CFRs received against Tripoli ACC at the FIR boundary points LOSUL and DETAR. Egypt representative reported the situation with Tripoli ACC remains the same since the last SMR, although there is good radar coverage at LOSUL and DETAR, Cairo ATC still continuing to suffer from traffic entering their FIR without prior coordination. The Scrutiny Group also noticed the lack of reports at position SILKA on AWY UM872 which is the FIR transfer point between Jeddah and Cairo ACCs, this point used to be exposed to a lot of CFRs by Jeddah and Cairo ATC units, both units succeeded to improve traffic handling at this point in response to the observations from the last Scrutiny Group meeting which resulted normal operation at this point. Egypt representative informed that no CFRs had been received against Larnaca and Athens FIRs for a long time, and requested that this issue be followed up with the Cairo ACC. The MIDRMA consider the level of reporting CFRs and LHDs by Egypt is Unsatisfactory.
- 4- The Scrutiny Group evaluated the reports received from the I.R. of Iran and found most the CFRs were against Karachi ATCU at position JIWANI and some CFRs reported against Muscat ATCU at position DENDA, the representative of the I.R. of Iran reported that Tehran ACC is still suffering from coordination problems with Baghdad ACC due to lack of adequate communication with them and he urged Iraq to find a quick solution to this chronic problem. The MIDRMA informed the meeting that no reports received from Iran against Kabul, Ashgabat, Turkmenbashi, Baku, Yerevan and Ankara FIRs since 2007. The MIDRMA considers the level of reporting CFRs and LHDs by the I.R. of Iran is Unsatisfactory.
- 5- The extreme majority of the CFRs received from Kuwait were against Baghdad ACC concentrated at position SIDAD, these CFRs can cause a serious threat to the safety of air traffic during busy periods, and because of the short flying time within Kuwait FIR for the traffic entering via SIDAD and leaving via RABAP or DETKO these CFRs can be extended to effect traffic entering Bahrain FIR via these two points. The MIDRMA did not receive any LHDs from Kuwait for the SMR 2012 and SMR 2013 reporting periods. The MIDRMA consider the level of reporting LHDs by Kuwait is Unsatisfactory.
- 6- During the SMR 2013 reporting period, the MIDRMA received 4 LHDs only from Saudi Arabia. All these LHDs were filed at position WEJ and Saudi Arabia reported the occurrences were traffic converging at same flight levels transferred by Cairo ATC to Jeddah ATC without prior coordination or approval from Jeddah ATC. The Scrutiny Group addressed the continued NIL reporting of LHDs and CFRs to the representative of Saudi Arabia for the SMR 2013 reporting period as this is reflecting unrealistic picture of Jeddah/Riyadh FIRs which handle very busy traffic especially during the Haj period. The MIDRMA consider the level of reporting CFRs and LHDs by Saudi Arabia is Unsatisfactory.

2.6 The MIDRMA was forced to follow the same evaluation mechanism during this meeting for the reported CFRs and LHDs by the absent states and determined which reports from those are influence in the risk of collision associated with the implementation of RVSM, although this process was supposed to be carried out by the absent member states , the MIDRMA could not find any other way to overcome the lack of endorsing the reports other than validating and calculating the total deviations period by themselves.

2.7 The CFRs and LHDs reported by Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Syria, UAE and Yemen were only discussed with the neighboring members attended the meeting which could not help to find or discuss the reported occurrences very effectively due to the lack of explanation by the reported States and because of the proposed solutions by the SG might not be feasible or acceptable by the States concerned. The reporting of CFRs and LHDs levels by Iraq, Jordan and UAE are Satisfactory and the reporting levels for Lebanon, Oman, Syria and Yemen are Unsatisfactory.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) urge all MID States to attend and participate in future Scrutiny Group Meetings; and
- b) discuss the issue of continuous NIL CFRs and LHDs reports provided by some States.

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