



SAFE SKIES.  
**SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURE.**

ICAO RISK ASSESSMENT SEMINAR FOR  
CIVIL AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS NEAR OR  
OVER CONFLICT ZONES

*Nairobi, Kenya : 23 -25 June 2025*



# International and Regional conflict zone risk management perspectives.

—  
MAKI MAKHANYA

SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (SACAA)

ICAO Regional Risk Assessment Seminar for Civil Aircraft Operations Over or Near  
Conflict Zones.

Nairobi, Kenya : 23 -25 June 2025

# Presentation Overview

1. South Africa's Regulatory Approach
2. South Africa's Aviation Profile - Operations over/near Conflict Zones
3. Types of Operation
4. Operator RISK Assessment
5. Recent Reported Incidents and Mitigation
6. Lessons Learned from SA Operations
7. Gaps and Challenges
8. Recommendations & Conclusion

# Regulatory Approach:

South Africa as a state has adopted Risk Performance Based Oversight (RPBO) approach. The key Indicators for this approach are the following:

- At inception Operators are required to conduct threat and risk assessments. This process is to be conducted when applying for an Air Operator Certificate (AOC) or when adding new stations.
- Air Carriers operating in/near Conflict Zones are required to submit Risk Assessment conducted for each of the stations they operate in. The Risk Assessment must be continually re-assessed at any given time when the threat landscape changes. Incidents are to be reported immediately as per Regulations.
- The Risk Performance Based Oversight Approach is intended to look at these dynamics in order to effectively conduct meaningful Oversight.

# South Africa's Aviation Profile - Operations over/near Conflict Zones

1. Significant number of operators support humanitarian and peacekeeping missions
2. Frequent operations in conflict-prone regions: Central Africa, Horn of Africa, Middle East, Asia, Caribbean
3. National carrier and charter operators exposed to varying levels of threat

# Types of Operation

Contract Work for International Organisations in the form of wet leases also known as ACMI (Aircraft, Maintenance, Crew and Insurance)

List of Organisations Serviced:

1. World Food Programme
2. UNICEF
3. World Health Organisation
4. UN Peacekeeping Forces
5. Petroleum Companies
6. Mining Companies

# Operator RISK Assessment:

Sample:

Risk Identifier	Risk Type	Who is Impacted	HAZARD	RISK	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Initial Risk (L x I)	Controls or Action's to mitigate the risk towards the impacted	By Whom	Date	Likelihood (L)	Number	Impact (I)	Post / Residual Risk (L x I)	Completed			
															Y/N			
SECURITY RA Line Station 4 2024	Operational	Pilots/Passengers/Crew	Political Protests and Civil Unrest	Political protests frequently escalate, potentially trapping personnel or disrupting travel routes.	Frequent - Likely to occur, has occurred frequently (More frequently than once a year)	5	Catastrophic	A	5A	real-time local intelligence, drone footage of routes and updates from police; diversify travel routes; establish safe zones with local contacts. Use unmarked vehicles with tinted windows, coordinate with local security for routes	Security Manager	30 October 2024	Remote - Unlikely but possible to occur (Has occurred rarely - once every 3-5 years)	3	Catastrophic	A	3A	Y

# Operator RISK Assessment Sources:

## Intelligence Providers:

1. MedAire
2. Blake International
3. Intelligence Bulletins

## Realtime Information Sources:

1. Governments
2. Open-Source e.g. Online News
3. Social Media Groups e.g. WhatsApp

# Recent Reported Incidents and Mitigation:

<b>INCIDENTS</b>	<b>MITIGATION</b>
<b>Insurgence at Crew Bases</b>	<b>Security Alarms, Protection Bunkers, Shields</b>
<b>Hijack Attempt Overnight – tampered aircraft seals</b>	<b>Aircraft to return to Base after each Operation.</b>
<b>Terrorist attack on Aircraft.</b>	<b>Crew evacuated, Local Law Enforcement Intervention, Risk Assessment conducted, Operations resumed</b>
<b>Terrorist Attack on 2x SA Aircraft as a result of a Military Coup</b>	<b>Operations withdrawn</b>
<b>Political Instability rendering the country ungovernable.</b>	<b>Operations withdrawn</b>
<b>GPS Jamming/ Spoofing Over a Conflict Zone</b>	<b>Issuance of Yellow Tags, Effective use of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)</b>

# Lessons Learned from SA Operations

1. Importance of intelligence-informed decision making
2. Need for diplomatic coordination with host states
3. Building adaptive SOPs for operators in volatile regions

# Gaps and Challenges

1. Inconsistent regional risk-sharing mechanisms
2. Limited state-to-state collaboration
3. Variability in operator capability to assess and manage conflict zone related risk

# Recommendations

1. Strengthen regional intelligence and risk-sharing platforms
2. Promote adoption of ICAO Doc 10084
3. Foster trust-based dialogue between civil and military sectors

# Conclusion

1. Conflict zone risk management is a shared responsibility
2. Continued collaboration is key to safe and secure civil aviation operations



Thank You!