

**60th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Sendai, Japan
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AGENDA ITEM 3: AVIATION SAFETY

**UPHOLDING THE SAFETY OF CIVIL AVIATION AMIDST
GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS**

(Presented by International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA),
co-sponsored by Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) and
International Air Transport Association (IATA))

SUMMARY

This paper highlights the ramifications of armed conflict on civil aviation infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on the safety and well-being of air traffic control personnel operating in or near affected regions. It underscores the critical role of air traffic controllers as neutral safety professionals and reaffirms the international legal protections that apply to civil aviation infrastructure and personnel. The paper calls for enhanced international commitment to safeguarding civil aviation systems amid geopolitical instability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) has noted with profound concern, the recent targeting of civilian aviation infrastructure in the context of escalating geopolitical tensions. Such actions not only disrupt critical aviation operations, but also place the lives of civil aviation professionals and the traveling public at considerable risk.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Federation extends its solidarity to air traffic controllers serving in conflict-affected regions, who continue to maintain airspace safety amidst exacerbated operational pressures and security uncertainties. Continuing to work under such conditions demonstrates exceptional dedication in the face of elevated personal and professional risk.

2.2 Civil air traffic controllers are non-combatant personnel, whose duties are grounded in principles of neutrality, professionalism, and public safety. They play a vital yet often invisible role in preserving the continuity and integrity of civil aviation operations during periods of instability.

2.3 International humanitarian law, including relevant ICAO provisions and the Geneva Conventions, offers explicit protection for civilian infrastructure and those who operate within it. Adherence to these legal standards is essential to safeguarding global aviation systems.

2.4 IFATCA urges all actors to refrain from conduct that could endanger civil aviation infrastructure or personnel. We further encourage the global community, including the United Nations, ICAO, and relevant regional institutions, to reinforce mechanisms that protect the operational sanctity and neutrality of air navigation services.

2.5 The enduring commitment of air traffic controllers to public safety, even under adverse conditions, stands as a testament to the professionalism embedded within the aviation community. IFATCA reiterates its unwavering support for these individuals and calls for strengthened international protection for their continued safety.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) acknowledge the vulnerability of civil aviation infrastructure in conflict zones;
- b) reaffirm international commitments to protect civil aviation personnel and assets in accordance with ICAO provisions and humanitarian law;
- c) encourage States and stakeholders to promote and uphold the operational neutrality of civil air traffic controllers; and
- d) support international frameworks and initiatives that aim to mitigate the impact of armed conflict on civilian aviation systems.

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