

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

*Sendai, Japan
28 July - 1 August 2025*

AGENDA ITEM 5: AVIATION SECURITY AND FACILITATION

**SECURITY CONCERNS OF THE ROTARY-WING AIRCRAFT OPERATE
FROM ELEVATED HELIPADS LOCATED IN COMMERCIAL CITIES
INTO ESTABLISHED AERODROMES**

(Presented by Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka)

SUMMARY

This paper discusses the increasing use of elevated helipads above high-rise buildings in commercial cities into established aerodromes across the Asia and Pacific Regions and the rising need for strong aviation security (AVSEC) oversight over such facilities and processes.

It identifies unique vulnerabilities associated with the rotor-wing aircraft operations from the elevated helipads into established aerodromes and proposes regional dialogue with in themselves, risk-based assessment strategies, and updated regulatory guidance to mitigate potential threats.

SECURITY CONCERNS OF THE ROTARY-WING AIRCRAFT OPERATE FROM ELEVATED HELIPADS LOCATED IN COMMERCIAL CITIES INTO ESTABLISHED AERODROMES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Asia-Pacific region has seen rapid urbanization and commercial development over the past decade, leading to increased reliance on rotary-wing aircraft operations in densely populated commercial zones and cities. Further, the operations into established aerodromes from the elevated helipads have been increasing.

1.2 Elevated helipads situated above the high-rise commercial buildings or skyscrapers which are becoming increasingly common, particularly for VIP transport, emergency response, and air taxi services. However, these facilities often fall outside the scope of conventional airport AVSEC planning and oversight.

1.3 This paper aims to highlight the unique security vulnerabilities posed by rotary-wing aircraft operating from the elevated helipads into established aerodromes and the urgent need for standardized risk management approaches across the region.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Vulnerabilities and Threat Exposure

2.1.1 Elevated helipads are inherently accessible from both aviation and ground-based threats. Given their urban location and proximity to high-value targets, these platforms may be prone to

- a) Unauthorized access by individuals to the rooftop or helipad
- b) Sabotage or intrusion with aircraft on or approaching the helipad
- c) Use and aim of the helipad for unlawful interference, including hijacking or explosive transport
- d) Surveillance or reconnaissance operations from adjacent buildings

2.1.2 Unlike traditional heliports or airports, elevated helipads may not have dedicated AVSEC infrastructure, perimeter fencing, or qualified AVSEC personnel on-site.

2.2 Regulatory and Oversight Gap

2.2.1 In many States, oversight of elevated helipads is limited or excluded from their national civil aviation security programs (NCASPs), due to jurisdictional overlap between aviation and local authorities.

2.2.2 Absence of standardized AVSEC procedures for helipads has led to significant variation in practices / procedures across the region.

2.3 Recommendations for Regional Consideration

2.3.1 **Risk-Based AVSEC Inspections:** States are encouraged to conduct targeted risk assessments of elevated helipads in major commercial zones, factoring in their location, user profile, and potential threat scenarios.

2.3.2 **Inclusion in NCASP:** National Civil Aviation Security Programs (NCASP) should be updated to include specific provisions for the regulation and inspection of elevated helipads and its operations.

2.3.3 **Collaboration with Local Authorities:** Greater inter-agency coordination is needed between aviation regulators, building management, law enforcement, and emergency services to manage security risks effectively.

2.3.4 **Development of Regional Guidance:** ICAO APAC, in consultation with regional States, could consider the development of supplementary guidance material or a model checklist addressing the security threats and vulnerabilities of elevated helipads.

3 ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) The meeting is invited to note the emerging risks associated with elevated rotary-wings aircraft operating from elevated helipads into established aerodromes.
- b) Encourage APAC regional States to integrate elevated helipads into national AVSEC oversight frameworks based on risk assessment; and
- c) Encourage APAC Regional States to share information and best practices relating to security measures addressing helipad and rotary wing aircraft operations including through established Forums such as the APAC Regional AVSEC Coordination Forum (RASCF).

-END-