

# KABUL FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT)

## Bulletin 2021/009

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### KABUL FIR CCT BULLETIN #9

This bulletin issued to provide an update on the ongoing contingency situation in the Kabul FIR. Changes/updates and new information are **highlighted**.

#### Summary of changes:

- **UPDATED:** Afghanistan Points of Contact/Officials appointed.
- **UPDATED:** Expected termination of local advisory service at Kabul International Airport.
- **UPDATED:** Expected termination of Prior Permission Required (PPR) coordination service at Kabul International Airport
- **NEW:** Planned video teleconference 01 September 2021 (tentative).

#### SITREP at 30 August 2021, 0800 UTC

1. **UPDATED:** ICAO has been informed that officials have been appointed to senior positions in the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority, and relevant Point of Contact details have been provided. However, multiple attempts have not yet established contact. ICAO is continuing efforts to establish contact with the ACAA Officials concerned.
2. **Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority:** you are requested to contact ICAO APAC Office: [apac@icao.int](mailto:apac@icao.int); [ssumner@icao.int](mailto:ssumner@icao.int) (tel/sms. +66 837557504).
3. **ENROUTE ATS in the Kabul FIR remains unavailable.** Most flights are avoiding the Kabul FIR.
4. **UPDATED:** The advisory service in the vicinity of Kabul International Airport established by military support agency to help with civil/military de-confliction and flow to the airport is currently **expected to cease at 2108310100 UTC**. All stakeholders should refer to NOTAM updates provided in the DINS (see paragraph 14), below.
5. **UPDATED:** Prior Permission Required (PPR) for operations at Kabul International Airport. NOTAMS refer (see also paragraph 17). Secure ramp space at OAKB is very limited and aircraft are expected to remain on the ground only long enough to embark passengers and depart: **Expect no more than 30 minutes of ground time**. No fuel or services are available.

The coordination of movements at Kabul International Airport under the PPR arrangements is **expected to cease at 2108310100**. Stakeholders intending to operate at Kabul International Airport should take into account the lack of any information after that time on ramp availability, conditions and services.

6. Due to the requirement to keep arriving/departing aircraft as high as possible, **all flights transiting the Kabul FIR are requested to operate at or above FL300** (request from military services at Kabul)

*Note: Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan also refers.*

<https://acaa.gov.af/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Afghanistan-ATM-Contingency-Plan-V2.1-APR-2021.pdf>

7. Afghanistan has not notified ICAO of the formal activation of its ATM contingency plan. ICAO has not yet received any notification from Afghanistan or neighbouring States of the formal activation of any contingency plan.
8. All relevant States are urged to activate any contingency arrangements they may have relating to non-availability of ATS in the Kabul FIR.
9. All potentially affected States, **particularly Bahrain, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and UAE**, are urged to take into account the likelihood of increased non-normal traffic through your FIRs, or traffic operating on other than the usual ATS routes.
10. Related NOTAMs published by the above States should be coordinated with neighbouring States and published at the earliest opportunity where specific ATS routing or other requirements for contingency traffic become necessary (particularly Afghanistan-neighbour States **China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan**), and in accordance with any established contingency plan where applicable.
11. It is likely that neighbouring States especially Pakistan and Turkmenistan may encounter pop-up departure traffic from OAKB at the FIR boundary. Further consideration is being given to local procedure development, *and may be the subject of a CCT video teleconference with ANSPs of neighbouring FIRs.*
12. Some traffic has been observed entering/leaving and operating within the Kabul FIR, both by day and by night:
  - Flights observed entering and leaving the Kabul FIR:
    - mostly military aircraft types, but also a small number unknown civil aircraft types operating to/from Kabul. ICAO has no information on the purpose of these flights, but considers they are likely to be evacuation flights;
  - Flights observed operating in the Kabul FIR:
    - Military aircraft types apparently operating on random tracks at various upper levels above F290, and observed up to FL405.

*Note 1: periodical observations made using publicly available online flight tracking services. Observation of operating traffic is dependent on the coverage of the sensors contributing to the flight tracking service, and on aircraft transponders operation. There is likely to be other traffic that is not observed.*

*Note 2: No information is available on procedures used by these flights for entry to/exit from or operation within the Kabul FIR.*

13. Afghanistan AIS is not available. The following contingency-related NOTAM (now overdue for review) remains available on the Afghanistan AIS web portal (<https://www.afgais.com> or <https://www.notam-aaaa.com>):

(G1264/21 NOTAMN

Q) OAKX/QAFAM/IV/NBO/E/000/999/

A) **OAKX** B) 2108160445 C) 2108180445 EST

E) KABUL AIRSPACE HAS BEEN RELEASED TO THE MILITARY. ADVISE TRANSIT AIRCRAFT TO REROUTE.

ANY TRANSIT THROUGH KABUL AIRSPACE WILL BE UNCONTROLLED. SURROUNDING FIRS HAVE BEEN ADVISED.)

All stakeholders are requested to note the information in this NOTAM aligns with NOTAMs provided in the USA DINS (see item 14).

ICAO currently has no information on the expected continuity of this web-based NOTAM service provided by Afghanistan. The information provided by this service is not updated, and must therefore be treated with appropriate caution.

14. NOTAMs for Kabul FIR (OAKX,) and Kabul International aerodrome (OAKB), have been published on the USA Defense Internet NOTAM Service (DINS, <https://www.notams.faa.gov/dinsQueryWeb/>).
- 15. ALL STAKEHOLDERS ARE URGED TO CHECK BOTH THE AFGHANISTAN AIS PORTAL AND THE DINS SERVICE FOR NOTAM UPDATES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**
16. Due to changing information being published in NOTAMs in DINS but not coordinated with ICAO or the CCT, snapshots of NOTAMs are no longer attached to CCT Bulletins.
17. **UPDATED:** The military organizations managing the Prior Permission Required (PPR) programme for operations Kabul International Airport have emphasized the need for all flights to Kabul to strictly comply with the PPR process described in NOTAMs OAKB available in DINS and any subsequent NOTAM that updates the information. Flights that do not comply with the PPR process cannot be accommodated due to limited aircraft parking capacity. Note: the PPR coordination process is **expected to terminate at 2108310100 UTC**. All stakeholders should consult any NOTAMs published in DINS

## CCT Video Teleconferences

### **NEW:** Outcomes of the CCT Video Teleconference #2

A video-teleconference of the CCT was held from 0830 to 1030 UTC on Wednesday 25 August 2021. A Summary of Discussion is provided in **Attachment A**.

### **NEW:** CCT Video Teleconference #3

A further video-teleconference is tentatively planned to be held on Wednesday 01 September, to brief the CCT on any developments arising from the withdrawal of military support services at 2108310100 UTC.

## ICAO Contact

ICAO will arrange rotational availability of staff to support, where necessary, 24 hour availability of contingency coordination.

Contact details: Mr. Shane Sumner, [ssumner@icao.int](mailto:ssumner@icao.int), tel. +66 83 755 7504; and  
Mr. Hiroyuki Takata [htakata@icao.int](mailto:htakata@icao.int).

## Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 Web-Page

CCT Bulletins and other relevant ATM contingency-related information are now available on a dedicated web-page, accessible through the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office website:

Regional Office website:

<https://www.icao.int/apac/Pages/default.aspx>.

Afghanistan ATM Contingency 2021 web-page:

<https://www.icao.int/APAC/Meetings/Pages/2021-AFGH-ATM.aspx>.

Distribution of CCT bulletins to all CCT participants by email will continue. Bulletins and other relevant information will be posted to the website at the earliest opportunity during business hours (Bangkok).

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Regards,

ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office



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*International Civil Aviation Organization*

**Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) 2021  
Coordination Meeting 01**

Video Teleconference, 25 August 2021

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**KABUL FIR CONTINGENCY COORDINATION TEAM (CCT) 2021**

**COORDINATION MEETING 01**

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Kabul FIR CCT

1.1 The Kabul FIR CCT was formed on circulation of the Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) Bulletin 2021/001 (Bulletin #1) on 16 August 2021.

1.2 Bulletin #1 notified stakeholders that there were reports of major political/government instability in Afghanistan and potentially significant security challenges that airlines, IATA and ICAO considered could disrupt flight operations and/or the provision of ATS and AIS in the Kabul FIR.

1.3 No ATM contingency NOTAMs had been issued by Afghanistan. Information had been received indicating that normal ATS was being provided by Kabul Area Control Centre (ACC).

1.4 ACAA did not respond to multiple attempts by ICAO to establish contact and gather information on current and expected ATS capability. The CCT was therefore established, and the following Contingency Plans were circulated as attachments to Bulletin #1:

- *Kabul FIR Air Traffic Management Contingency Plan*; and
- *Inter-Regional Afghanistan Contingency Arrangements*.

Kabul FIR CCT Bulletin #8

1.5 CCT Bulletin #8 (**Attachment A**) issued at 0800 UTC on 24 August 2021 informed stakeholders of the ongoing unavailability of ATS in the Kabul FIR, and provided updated information on:

- Kabul ‘advisory service’ as promulgated in a NOTAM issued by the military agency at Kabul International Airport;
- ICAO observations of known traffic operating in the Kabul FIR; and
- Planning for a CCT video teleconference for the following day.

## **2. DISCUSSION OUTCOMES - CCT COORDINATION MEETING 01**

2.1 The CCT Coordination Meeting #2 was convened by video teleconference at 0830 UTC on 25 August 2021. The following States and International Organizations were invited to attend:

Afghanistan, AFCENT Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, India, Iran, Iraq Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, AFCENT, UAE, USA, EUROCONTROL, CANSO, IATA, IFATCA, IFALPA, NATO, ICAO APAC, ICAO EUR ICAO MID, ICAO HQ.

2.2 Afghanistan did not respond to the meeting invitation, and did not participate.

2.3 Key non-participating States either sharing a FIR boundary with Afghanistan or handling the additional traffic avoiding the Kabul FIR included Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In the case of the States sharing a FIR boundary with Afghanistan, further direct communication would be attempted by ICAO.

### Agenda Item 1: Afghanistan Air Navigation Services SITREP

2.4 Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority did not participate in the meeting. However, the meeting was joined by representatives of the AFCENT (military) team located at Kabul International Airport.

2.5 ICAO provided a summary of events, actions and communications up to this point, including known information on the continuing unavailability of ATS and AIS, and a brief summary of the contents of CCT Bulletin #8.

2.6 The AFCENT team was preparing a traffic management plan to provide for safe segregation of evacuation flights to and from Kabul within the Kabul FIR. AFCENT advised that the plan *may* be available within the same day. When available, AFCENT would share the plan with ICAO to facilitate coordination with neighbouring States..

2.7 While some operations above FL280 had been observed in the Kabul FIR, the majority of operations were conducted at or below FL280. However, it was noted that observation of traffic operating in the Kabul FIR could only be conducted using publicly available flight tracking web resources, and the availability of information on flights was dependent on the location of sensors and the operation of aircraft transponder equipment.

2.8 The meeting noted that the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan was divided into two strata, with the contingency route structure for traffic crossing the FIR in the FL300 and above stratum.

2.9 Traffic had been observed transiting the Kabul FIR on ATS route P500. During normal operations the responsibility for ATC services for this route was delegated to Tajikistan, with direct coordination between Tajikistan and Pakistan. This arrangement was still operating, and as such was aligned with the expectations of the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan.

2.10 IATA observed that its member airlines were normally restricted to operations not below FL330 when transiting the Kabul FIR. However, at this time there was no indication of any airline planning to operate through the FIR.

2.11 AFCENT informed the meeting that the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan had been taken into account in evacuation traffic planning.

2.12 ICAO (EUR) informed the meeting that the operations of European carriers had been restricted by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), and several States had issued NOTAMs forbidding operations in the Kabul FIR by aircraft/operators on their registry.

2.13 IATA informed the meeting that the situation had a very significant impact on airlines due to limited options being available. Some flights were already restricted from operations in other FIRs, resulting in further, substantially increased deviations from normal routes as a consequence of avoiding the Kabul FIR.

2.14 The meeting was informed that overflight permissions through the Jeddah FIR were being facilitated, and that additional routes had been made available in the Amman and Tel Aviv FIRs.

2.15 Overflight permissions were a problem, and IATA was working on this matter with relevant States.

#### Agenda Item 2: Current and Expected Security Situation

2.16 AFCENT informed the meeting that the situation on the ground in Kabul was moving rapidly. While the company contracted to provide en-route ATC services had intended to remain in Kabul to resume the service, they had been instructed to leave by the owners of the contract.

2.17 AFCENT had been planning to set up a local tactical ATC facility. However, ATC facilities had been overrun and ransacked. Limited ATS functions focused on aerodrome operations were being provided from a guard shack.

2.18 In response to IATA's query, the meeting was informed that no terminal services were available.

#### Agenda Item 3 – Traffic Data and Observations

2.19 ICAO (MID) informed the meeting on behalf of Iran that around 40 additional flights per day were operating through the Tehran FIR, and that this was manageable. Some flights had been operating from the Kabul FIR and landing at aerodromes within Iran. There were currently no restrictions on such flights using international airports in Iran.

2.20 Pakistan also informed the meeting that traffic diverting to the south to avoid the Kabul FIR, and traffic on ATS route P500, was being managed without difficulty.

2.21 USA informed the meeting that, having gained access to space-based ADS-B data, no aircraft had been observed transiting the Kabul FIR in the last three days.

#### Agenda Item 4: Contingency Planning and Responses

2.22 AFCENT informed the meeting that the contingency plan under development included defined entry/exit points at the Kabul FIR boundary, the offsetting of both inbound and outbound flights 4 NM to the right of track, and 15 minutes longitudinal spacing. Several CTAF frequencies had been defined. On this point, ICAO noted that the air to air communications frequency specified in current NOTAM (123.45 MHz) may need to be reviewed as it was different than the frequency specified in the Kabul FIR Contingency Plan (125.2 MHz)

2.23 While noting that the ATC contractor was working on a plan to assess the damage to ATS facilities, at this point in time any previous contracts were likely to be no longer valid.

Way Forward

2.24 The meeting agreed was informed that the final withdrawal of foreign military forces was still expected to occur by 0100 UTC on 31 August 2021.

2.25 The next video teleconference would be tentatively held on 30 August at 0830 UTC, unless other developments warranted an earlier meeting.

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