



United Arab Emirates

UAE Experience in ATM Contingency and Crisis Management

MID Region ATM Contingency Framework Workshop (RACF) Muscat, Oman | 4–5 February 2026



Introduction and Situation Overview

Contingency Event

Partial closure of UAE airspace due to regional conflict impact necessitating immediate emergency protocols.

Date of Occurrence

Monday, 23rd June 2025

Primary Response Measures

- Activation of Emergency Security Control of Air Traffic (ESCAT)
- Establishment of contingency ATS routes
- Issuance of NOTAMs to ensure safe and orderly ATM operations



Pre-Event Preparatory Actions (13–22 June 2025)

- Initial assessment and contingency planning initiated
- ATFM measures activated at Emirates ACC
- Crisis Management Cell (CMC) and AVSEC coordination meetings conducted
- GCC Contingency Cell established
- NASAC Special Meeting convened

Operational Context

- Multiple FIRs affected in the region
- Rapidly evolving and uncertain operational environment



Continuous Disruptions in the MID Region

- The MID region are characterized by:
 - Frequent geopolitical tensions
 - Airspace closures and restrictions
 - GNSS interference and degraded operations
- These disruptions are no longer exceptional events, but a **recurring operational reality**
- ATM systems must therefore evolve from:
 - Reactive crisis response
 - to
 - Proactive, resilient contingency frameworks**



UAE Framework (UACACC & GCC Cell)

UAE Airspace Coordination & Contingency Framework UAE Airspace Coordination and Contingency Cell (UACACC)

- Established by GCAA in **2012** as a national coordination mechanism
- Central hub for managing airspace during:
 - Disruptions
 - Emergencies
 - Regional tensions
- Coordinates:
 - ATFM measures
 - Cross-border flows within the MID region
 - Civil–military airspace usage
- Supports stakeholders through:
 - Daily coordination teleconferences
 - Dedicated web-based information platform

MID Regional Coordination

- Coordination conducted with:
 - ICAO MID Office
 - Adjacent MID ANSPs
- Enables:
 - Harmonized contingency response
 - Cross-border traffic management
 - Regional resilience

The screenshot displays the UACACC website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Services, Media Center, Digital Participation, Publications, Open Data, and About GCAA. Below the navigation bar is a header section for UACACC (UAE Airspace Coordination and Contingency Cell). The main content area is divided into several sections:

- OMDB ARR: AMAN rate 36 due traffic demand:** A section indicating that departures are stopped for Zone 01, 02, and 03.
- OMAA ARR: AMAN terminated due to insufficient demand:** A section indicating that departures are allowed for Zone 01, 02, and 03.
- Zone Departures Stopped:** A table showing the status of departures for various zones (OMDB, OMAA, OMBW, OMBE, OMBJ, OMBL) across different zones (Zone 01, 02, 03).
- No. of Available parking slots:** A table showing the number of available parking slots for various zones (OMDB, OMAA, OMBW, OMBE, OMBJ, OMBL) across different zones (Zone 01, 02, 03).
- RELATED LINKS:** A section with links for Air Transport News, Arrival of Posts, Airlines, and NCM.
- IFALPA:** A section with a link for IFALPA.

At the bottom of the page, there are two status boxes: "DIFLOW RESUME NORMAL" and "OMDB ARR 36 DUE TRAFFIC DEMAND".

<https://www.gcaa.gov.ae/en/szc/uacacc>

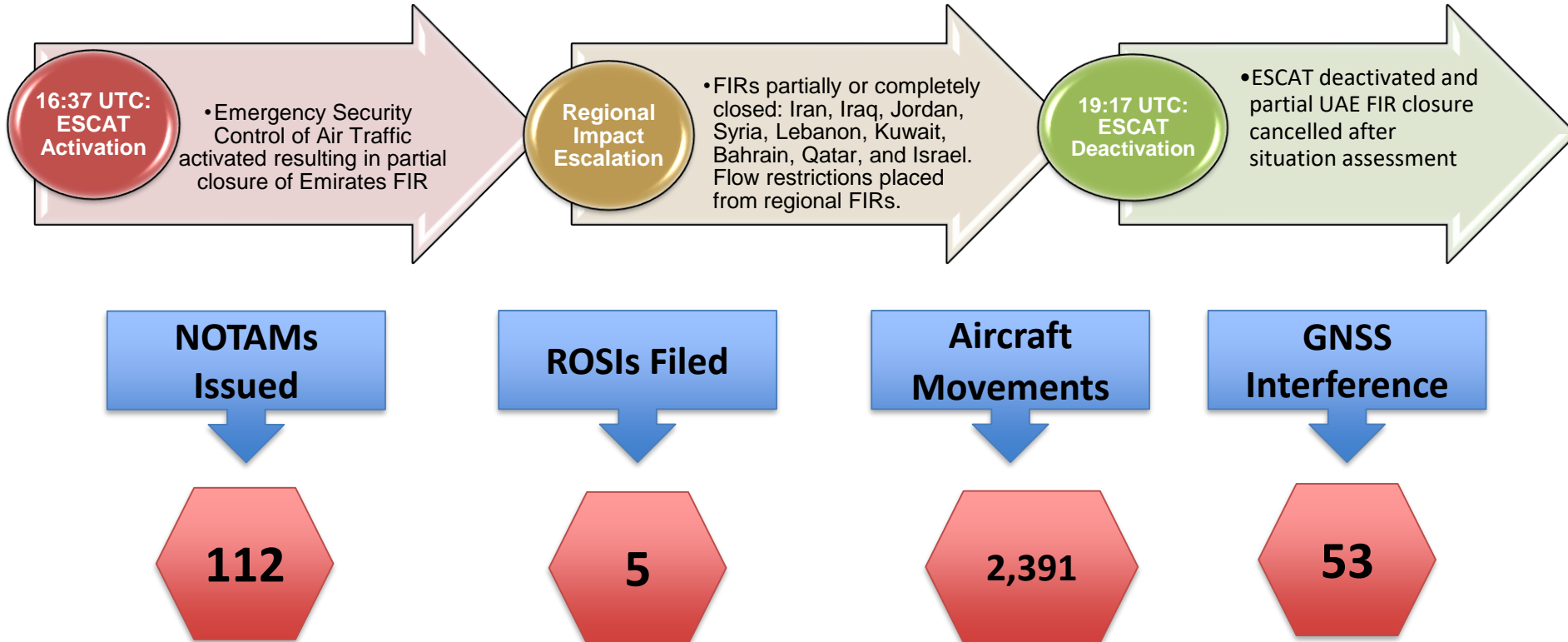


Regional Operational Impact

- More than **6 FIRs** partially or fully affected
- Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel
- Significant increase in operational notifications:
 - 302 NOTAMs issued
 - 62 ROSIs filed
 - 504 GNSS interference reports
- Daily traffic ranged between **2,391 – 2,848 movements**



Critical Day: 23 June 2025





Resolution Phase (24 June 2025)

Contingency Routes Established

ATS Z868, T636, T560, Q601, and Z889 were activated via 10 NOTAMs to maintain safe airspace operations within Emirates FIR and adjacent FIRs

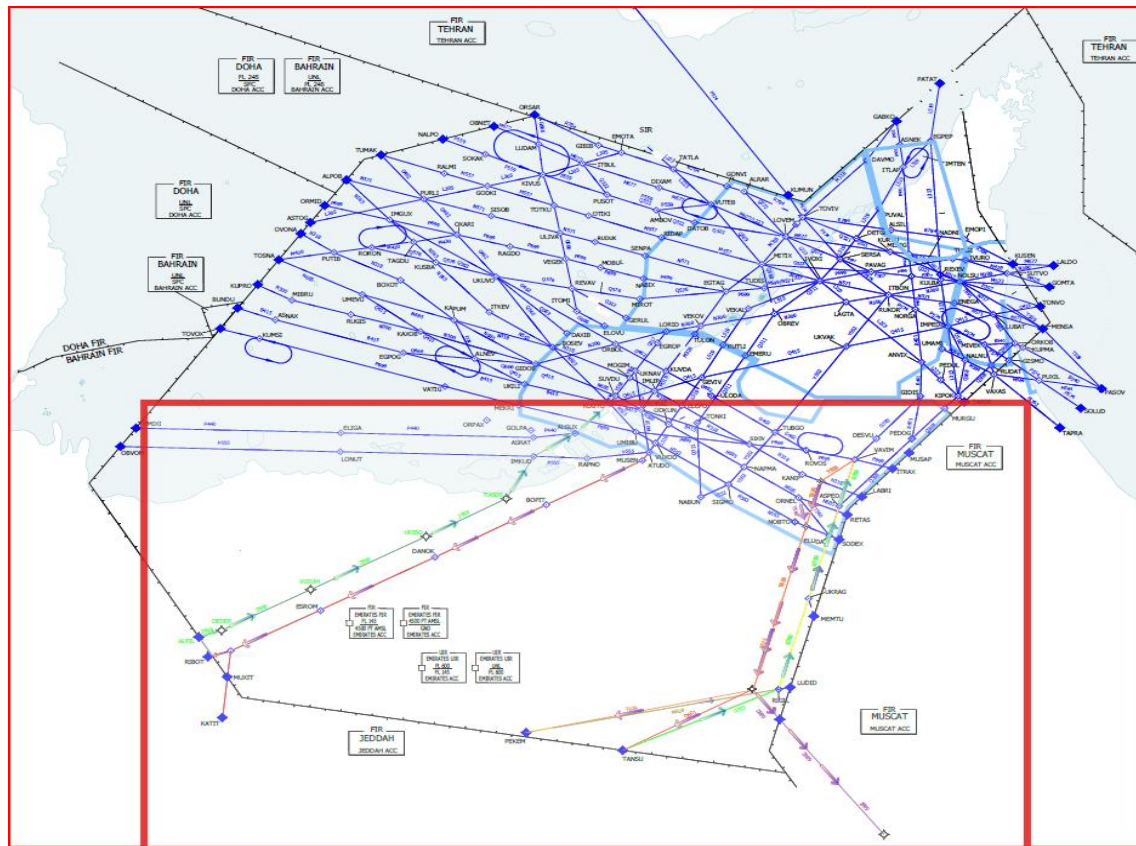
Continued Regional Impact

- 6 FIRs remained partially or completely closed: Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel

Crisis Management Cell Deactivation

- CMC cancelled after the situation had stabilized sufficiently to return to standard operational procedures

Contingency Routes Activation





Post-Event Actions

❖ NASAC Meeting

The National Airspace Advisory Committee convened to thoroughly discuss:

- Effectiveness of ESCAT implementation procedures
- Coordination between civil and military authorities
- Communication channels efficiency during crisis
- Transition from emergency to normal operations

❖ Stakeholder Feedback Collection

Comprehensive survey distributed to internal stakeholders focusing on:

- Preparedness level assessment
- Communication effectiveness
- ESCAT Implementation
- Contingency Routes
- Identification of improvement opportunities



Key Challenges Faced

1. Contingency Route Design under Time Pressure

- Requirement to design and activate routes on very short notice
- Coordination through **5LNC**, with strong support from **ICAO MID**
- Publication of NOTAMs outside normal office hours
- Need to connect new ATS routes with adjacent FIRs

*(Special appreciation to colleagues from **Jeddah FIR** and **Muscat FIR** for their close cooperation)*

2. Traffic Already Airborne

- Re-routing aircraft already in flight during contingency activation
- Managing safety, predictability, and workload simultaneously

3. Diverse Operator Preferences

- Different routing and operational preferences among airspace users
- Increased coordination demand during peak uncertainty



Mitigation Measures & Way Forward

- Pre-design **multiple contingency route scenarios**
- Prepare **pre-coordinated NOTAM templates** for immediate activation
- Consider publishing selected contingency routes as **CDR3**:
 - Published in advance
 - Activated only during contingency events
- Strengthen **pre-event coordination with adjacent FIRs**
- Enhance operational readiness through **scenario-based contingency planning**



Regional Digital Platform (Recommendation)

Current Practice

During contingency events, coordination often relies on:

- Phone calls
- Emails
- Informal messaging groups

Limitations

These methods:

- Are not centralized
- Depend on individuals rather than institutions
- Become outdated when roles or focal points change
- Create additional workload for operational units

Recommendation

Establish a **MID regional, ICAO-aligned digital coordination platform** to:

- Share real-time contingency and airspace information
- Publish official coordination messages
- Maintain updated focal points and responsibilities

This platform should serve as the **primary reference** for stakeholders during crises.



Key Lessons Learned

- Preparedness and flexibility are critical in rapidly evolving crises
- Early and continuous **civil-military coordination** is essential
- Cross-border coordination significantly reduces operational disruption
- Pre-planned contingency arrangements reduce response time and workload



Recommendations (Regional Perspective)

- Establish a **Unified Regional ATM Contingency Framework**
- Agree on **pre-coordinated cross-FIR contingency routes**
- Develop a **regional real-time information-sharing platform** for:
 - NOTAMs
 - Flow restrictions
 - GNSS interference
 - Airspace status updates

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