



DOES FLYING PRIVATE MEAN YOU'RE ALSO FLYING ABOVE ALL THREATS?

News / Business aviation



The recent shocking events in Egypt and, previously, Ukraine involving commercial jets flying over active conflict zones have received considerable media attention and prompted yet another heated discussion regarding airline routes. Meanwhile, few business travelers are aware of the fact that some of the fastest-growing business travel routes stretch in very close proximity or even directly over the danger zones. In fact, it is quite possible you're flying over one of them right now.

Currently, there are over 13 countries marked high risk or prohibited by the aviation authorities worldwide. High risk often means that aircraft 'shouldn't' fly below the set height, often between 20 000 and 32 000 feet. These proposals or NOTAMs (Notices to Airman) are published by the FAA, the EASA and other regulatory bodies, however, not everywhere you're obliged to act in line with them. And when you are as rich as Croesus and fly private, you may think that you can fly over any place you want to.

Fortunately, according to Vitalij Kapitonov, the CEO of KlasJet, private jet operators neither can, nor would ever recommend cutting corners and flying over high-risk airspace, let alone no-fly zones. "The process of route planning is very simple yet very clear-cut. After receiving an inquiry, the flight department dives into the route planning, which involves not only reviewing all recommendations and NOTAMs, but also weather forecasts, fuelling stops, etc. Afterwards, the

accumulated detailed information has to be approved or adjusted by the jet captain himself and only then the customer is presented with the summarized information.”

Without a doubt, in this highly personalized industry, routes can be altered according to individual client demands, says Kapitonov. “In general, one of the main criteria for choosing business aviation is flexibility and you can’t take that away from the customer. Commercial airlines fly to about 300 airports worldwide, while we can take off and land at any of more than 7000 airstrips. The same criteria apply to flight routes as well.”

Even if a customer wishes to alter a particular route, in the end, it is the captain of the business jet who always has the last word. For instance, if you wanted to fly over North Korea just for the thrill of it, you would definitely fail to convince any sane pilot to try and do that. While some commercial airlines still fly over certain parts of Mali, Syria and Iraq on very popular business routes like London-Dubai, Lagos-London and others, private aviation takes all the recommendations very seriously.

“Indeed, over the years, we have received requests to fly on different paths for various personal reasons, however, our crew knows perfectly well what a safety-sensitive sector business aviation is. After all, our job is to maintain the highest standards every single time. Nevertheless, if you decide to take a flight with an unlicensed or inexperienced operator, one can only guess what the consequences could be. All in all, entrusting your flights to operators with extensive experience in the field and professional staff is all you need to do in order to ensure you’re flying safe and sound every time you need to,” concludes Vitalij Kapitonov, the CEO of KlasJet.

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