



Osprey Flight Solutions

A new age for aviation risk management

Whitepaper

Plane sailing to Qatar:

Osprey's advice to commercial aviation operators during the 2022 World Cup

October 2022

Contents

Introduction	3
Logistics	4
Potential Protests	5
Alcohol & Drugs	5
Human Trafficking & Other Crime	6
Overflying Conflict Zones	6
Outlook	6
Contact Us	6

The FIFA World Cup 2022 is taking place in Qatar from 20th November to 18th December. It's the first time the tournament has been held in an Arab nation and the event is expected to attract more than 1.5 million football fans.

Despite a multi-billion dollar investment this record number of visitors is expected to put immense pressure on the tiny Gulf Arab state's infrastructure, hospitality and security sectors.

Unsurprisingly commercial airlines and private charters have registered a massive influx of flight bookings. An estimated 1,300 flights will be flying into Qatar daily for the duration of the event, with Hamad International Airport (OTHH/DOH) projected to serve 8,000 -10,000 passengers an hour.

The World Cup promises to be an unforgettable experience for individuals travelling to Qatar. However, the location of this year's tournament has the potential to pose some unique operational challenges. We take a look at these challenges in order to help operators plan ahead and ensure the experience is memorable for all the right reasons.



Logistics

Organisers and officials plan to execute meticulous strategies to ease congestion at Doha's airports. Hamad International Airport will accommodate all scheduled commercial carriers, and the old Doha International Airport (OTBD/DIA), which last saw passenger air services in 2014, was recently reopened to accommodate the excess demand and will be used predominantly for charter flights.

Concerns that the airports are not prepared for the World Cup have been raised. According to reports, officials have struggled to recruit enough new workers at the airports, including security and air traffic control. Reports also suggest that many new hires are starting work without completing necessary training, raising safety and security concerns.

There is also a possibility that flights will be diverted to neighbouring countries such as the UAE. A number of Gulf Cooperation Council airlines will operate shuttle flights to transport football fans from neighbouring countries every day.



Operators also need to be aware that congestion at the airports may become a challenge, with increased demand for slots and parking. The Qatari Civil Aviation Authority has issued [instructions](#) regarding slot management at the two airports. The maximum ground time permitted for narrow-body aircraft will be 60 minutes, and wide-body aircraft will be allowed 90 minutes. Slot cancellations and revisions will be "accepted and handled" up to 24 hours prior to the scheduled arrival time in Doha, but there will be hefty penalties for the violation or misconduct of approved slots.



Potential Protests



It's no secret that Qatar has received an avalanche of negative press ahead of hosting the World Cup. Protests over the state's labour practices are widely anticipated over allegations of migrant deaths during construction and preparations for the tournament. A string of French cities announced they will boycott the tournament by ditching World Cup festivities and fan zones, and Denmark's 2022 World Cup kit is entirely black in protest at the host nation's human rights record.

Commercial airline operators flying to this year's World Cup should be aware of the risks involved with being associated with the event. Repercussions may include disruption to schedules due to protests, as well as potential impacts on brand/reputation and insurance.

Alcohol & Drugs

With the FIFA event taking place in a Muslim country for the first time, operators need to understand the region's strict policies on alcohol. Alcohol is not illegal in Qatar; it is available for over-21-year-olds to buy from licensed hotel restaurants and bars, but there is zero tolerance for drinking in public, and being drunk in public is a crime.

Qatar also remains very strict on the use of drugs, and there are no exceptions for foreigners. Drug use is an escalating problem amongst football supporters. Fans caught smuggling drugs into Qatar potentially face the death penalty, with more likely consequences being a 20-year prison sentence and fines between QAR 100,000 (GBP 24,300) and QAR 300,000 (GBP 73,000). Those facing a charge for the second time – with convictions outside of the state taken into account – will face the death penalty.

Our advice for commercial airlines is to familiarise yourself with the alcohol policy of your destination country and create your own policy accordingly. Policies should be made clear to passengers in advance. We would also advise implementing a training programme for crew prior to your World Cup operations, including verbal de-escalation and physical restraint techniques.

Human Trafficking & other crime

Human trafficking in Qatar is a longstanding concern among human rights groups and an issue that airline operators need to be aware of. With the tournament on the horizon, Qatar is ramping up efforts to raise awareness and combat human trafficking. The Ministry of Labour has recently launched a campaign at Hamad International Airport to raise awareness of the issue and has announced a hotline dedicated to reporting abuses and violations.

Overflying Conflict Zones

Airspace over the Gulf region is not only very busy, but very complex. Most routes to Qatar require overflight of Iran, Iraq or, alternatively, Saudi Arabia. Aircraft registered in the United States (US) or on a codeshare agreement with a US-registered operation cannot use Iranian airspace. If they do, they risk six- or seven-figure fines by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Our advice is to monitor airspace issues on a daily basis and engage with a flight mitigation service provider that can support dynamic scheduled and non-scheduled operations in the Gulf.

Outlook

The World Cup is inching ever closer. It's one of the biggest events post-pandemic, and flight operations to Qatar may not be the most straightforward; however, with the right preparation, these are all challenges that can be overcome.

To find out more about [our leading aviation risk assessment tools](#), which provide an in-depth understanding of the risks facing your flight operations to the World Cup, then please get in contact today.

Contact us

T: +44 2086 112 659 E: info@ospreyfs.com
W: www.ospreyflightsolutions.com

Follow us:

In. [@Osprey Flight Solutions](#)
TW [@osprey-fs-news](#)

@ [@OspreyFlightSolutions](#)
f [@Ospreyfs](#)