



Russia/Ukraine – Escalating Border Tensions

During the past week, Russia has deployed additional military forces and equipment to the Crimean Peninsula and along its border with Ukraine. The deployments include tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, and air defense assets. Reports indicate a large presence of ground convoys and military aircraft. Since the occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia has significantly expanded its military presence in the region with air, naval, and ground-based weapons systems, including advanced long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries.

Concurrently, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine reported a recent increase in cease-fire violations, which consisted of primarily ground-based activity, associated with Russian-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine. Additionally, Ukraine's Ministry of Defense announced the killing of four Ukrainian soldiers by artillery strikes near Donetsk on 26 March.

The influx of additional Russian forces into Crimea and along the Russia-Ukraine border, inflammatory rhetoric, and multiple claimed ceasefire violations have escalated tensions in the region. Russia has attempted to downplay concerns over its recent deployments via press statements, claiming it only moved Russian forces within Russian territory. Russia's public statements also claimed Ukraine was responsible for the uptick in violence and that increased activity among North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member States posed a perceived threat, which compelled Russian forces to remain on "alert".

Conditions in the region remain unpredictable and highly fluid. There is a risk of possible increased violence along the line of contact, which could flare into renewed conflict in eastern Ukraine, either intentionally or from miscalculation and/or misperception. Should hostilities escalate, civil aviation operating in the region could be exposed to inadvertent risk. The Russian military, Russian-backed forces, and the Ukrainian military have access to advanced air defense weapons systems with maximum altitude capabilities extending well above cruising altitudes for civil aircraft. In the event of a skirmish or renewed conflict, the airspace on both sides of the line of contact or the Russia-Ukraine border could be exposed to potential weapons activity posing an associated risk to civil aircraft from misidentification or misperception. In July 2014, under similar conditions, Russian-backed forces in eastern Ukraine, equipped with radar-guided SAMs, mistakenly shot down a commercial airliner, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17). All 298 passengers and crew aboard MH17 perished.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 113 prohibits U.S. civil aviation operations in specified regions of the Dnipropetrovsk (UKDV) Flight Information Region (FIR) from surface to unlimited, as described in the rule.

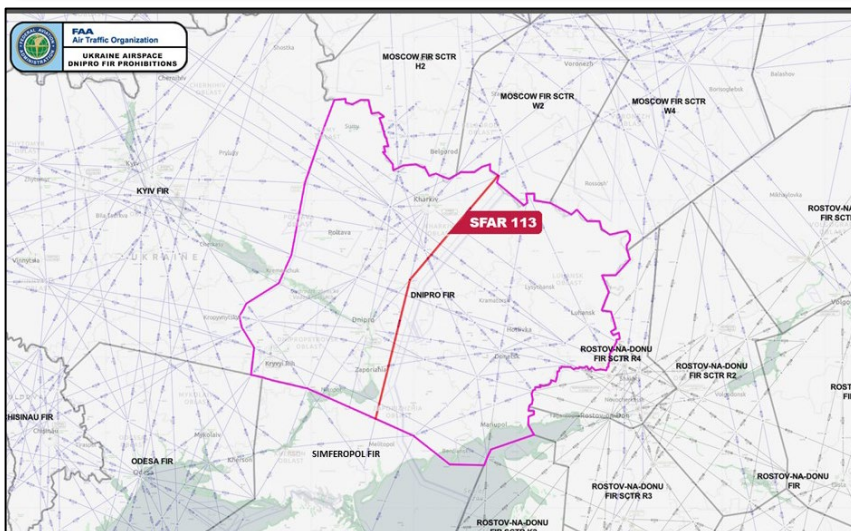
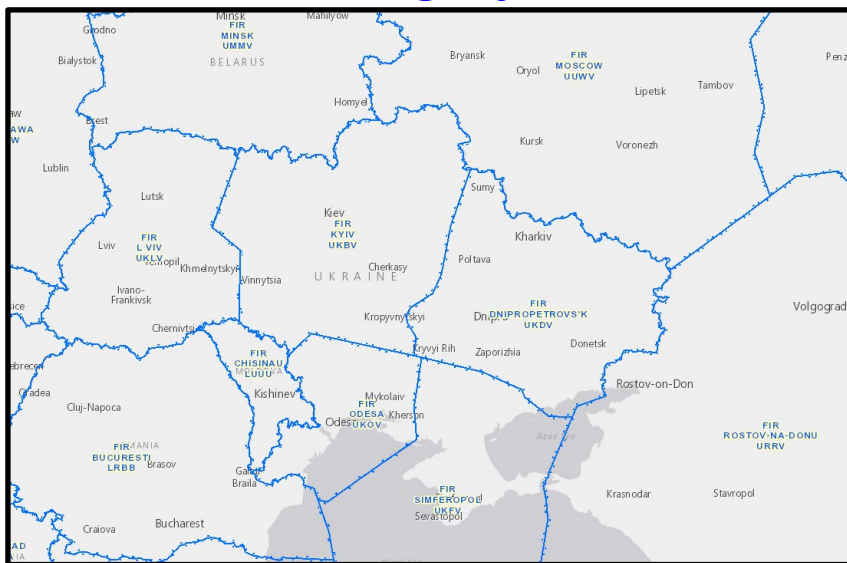
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Separately, Ukraine maintains a prohibited area over the Crimean Peninsula and adjacent Ukrainian territorial waters within the Simferopol FIR (UKFV).

On 31 March 2021, Transport Canada issued a Notice-to-Airmen (NOTAM) advising Canadian operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada against entering the Simferopol (UKFV) and UKDV FIRs. The Canadian NOTAM also urged great caution when operating in the Kyiv (UKBV), Odesa (UKOV), and Lviv (UKLV) FIRs.

Copies of all FAA-issued flight prohibition SFARs, flight prohibition NOTAMs, and advisory NOTAMs are available on FAA's Prohibitions, Restrictions and Notices website at: http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions/.

If there are any questions, please contact the FAA Threat Analysis Division (AXE-200) at 202-267-3203 or FAA-Watch@faa.gov.



Top Graphic: FIR boundaries for airspace managed by Ukraine.
Bottom Graphic: Western boundary of SFAR 113 in the UKDV FIR.
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