



Russia/Ukraine – Heightened Tension along Line of Contact

Continued heightened tension along the Line of Contact (LOC) in eastern Ukraine and Ukraine's border with Russia poses a potential risk to civil aviation from anti-aircraft capable weapon systems and possible electronic warfare activity. Jamming or other possible electronic warfare activity during the current period of heightened tension pose potential inadvertent safety-of-flight risks to civil aviation operations in the region.

On 08-09 April 2021, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine reported two unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) monitoring flights, operating out of Stepanivka, Ukraine, experienced global positioning systems (GPS) interference while operating along the LOC. The 09 April SMM UAS flight experienced GPS interference while operating north of Donetsk, near Hnativka, forcing it to execute an emergency landing. OSCE indicated increased GPS interference and jamming has been observed since 21 March 2021 along the LOC.

In late March, Russia deployed several thousand additional troops and equipment to the occupied Crimean Peninsula and along its border with Ukraine under the guise of a national exercise, raising regional tensions. The deployments included combined arms maneuver elements, artillery, and air defense assets. 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.

The continued presence of additional Russian forces in Crimea and along Russia's border with Ukraine, continued inflammatory rhetoric, and ongoing ceasefire violations have caused escalated tension in the region. Conditions in the region remain unpredictable and highly fluid, and there is a risk violence along the LOC may further increase and intensify. Should hostilities escalate, civil aviation operating in the region could be exposed to inadvertent risk. The Russian military, Russia-led 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 intensified fighting, the airspace on both sides of the LOC or the Russia-Ukraine border could be exposed to potential weapons activity, as well as increased safety-of-flight concerns due to GPS interference. In July 2014, under similar conditions, Russian-led forces in eastern Ukraine, equipped with radar-guided SAMs, shot down a commercial airliner, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17). All 298 passengers and crew aboard MH17 perished.

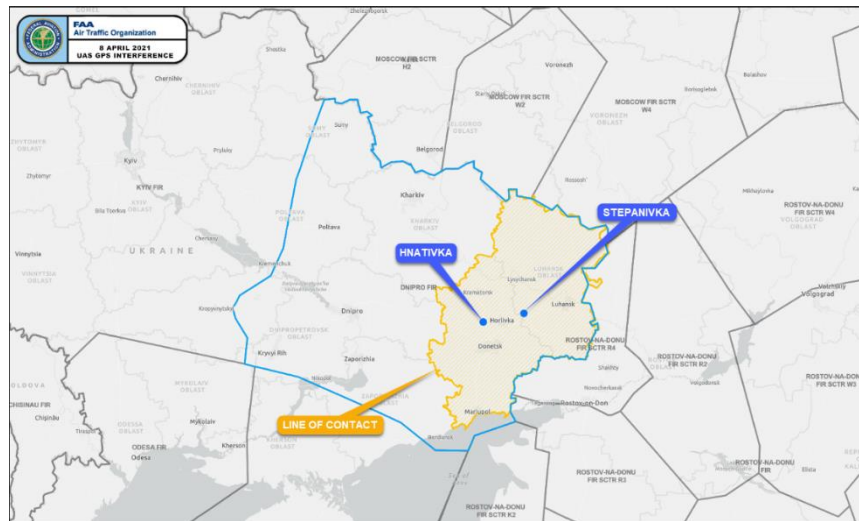
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 113 prohibits U.S. civil aviation operations in specified regions of the Dnipro (UKDV) Flight Information Region (FIR) from surface to unlimited, as described in the rule. Separately,

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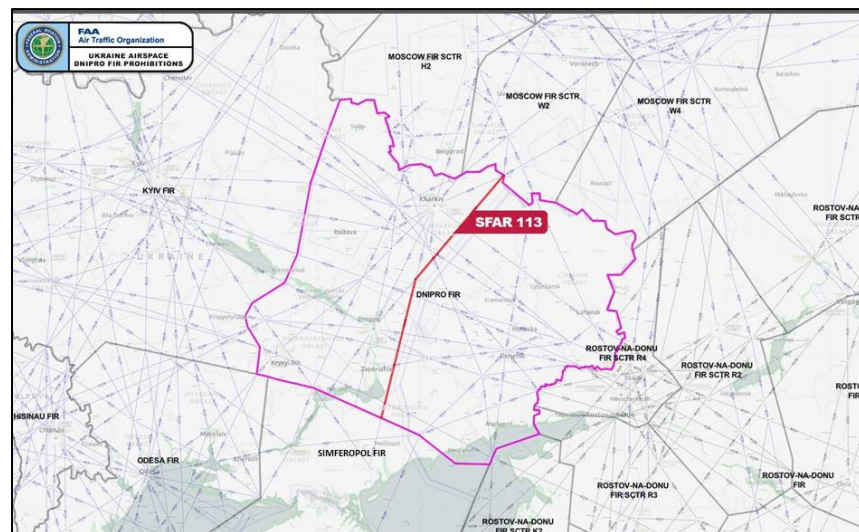
Ukraine maintains a prohibited area over the Crimean Peninsula and adjacent Ukrainian territorial waters within the Simferopol FIR (UKFV). On 31 March 2021, Transport Canada issued a Notice-to-Airmen (NOTAM) advising Canadian operators and owners of aircraft registered in Canada against entering the 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.



Graphic: OSCE UAS operating out of Stepanivka experienced GPS interference near Hnativka.



Graphic: Western boundary of SFAR 113 in the UKDV FIR.

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