

# POSITION PAPER

## FLIGHTS INTO AND OVER CONFLICT ZONES

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FPU Romania has received numerous concerns from Flight Crew members in our country regarding the ongoing crisis in Israel. They are particularly worried about the safety of operating flights to Israeli airports, as well as regional ones like Jordan. As of now, none of our members have received any risk assessment, official documentation, or information regarding the safety protocols for operations in Israel.

Additionally, we have become aware of ambiguous statements from several airline management officials suggesting that crew members are not allowed to refuse duties to Israel. Furthermore, disciplinary actions, including termination of employment contracts, have been threatened against individuals refusing to operate these flights.

It is important to emphasize that the Pilot in Command (PIC) is ultimately responsible for the safety of passengers, crew, and the aircraft. However, FPU Romania does not support the notion of operating flights to Israel voluntarily. This approach could create a discriminatory situation where senior crew members on permanent contracts may have the option to refuse, while juniors on temporary contracts might fear retaliation in the form of contract termination upon expiration and ultimately accept these flight missions. The appropriate solution is to utilize military personnel and suitable aircraft. FPU strongly opposes rescue flights conducted by commercial airlines that pose unnecessary risks to the safety of both crew and passengers.

[As reported by the Associated Press](#), the pilots' union of American Airlines has advised its members not to fly to Israel until they “can be reasonably assured of the region's safety and security”. This decision was taken considering the advisory from the U.S. State Department, highlighting the unpredictable nature of the current situation in Israel. The advisory emphasizes that mortar and rocket fire can occur without warning at any time, posing a significant risk to aircraft.

Ultimately, the issue at hand should not be about individual crew members having the option to refuse flights entering Israeli airspace. It revolves around a decision by relevant authorities to close the airspace for commercial carriers, or instead, the airlines should suspend operations until the safety and security of the area are restored.



This perspective aligns with the [United Nations' Statement on Commercial Airlines and Conflict Zones: Recommendations to Strengthen Air Safety and Prevent Unlawful Deaths](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Executions/StatementCommercialAirlinesConflictZones_Jan2021.pdf).<sup>1</sup>

To the volunteers considering such flights, please take into account the [ECA Position Paper](https://www.eurocockpit.be/positions-publications/flights-and-over-conflict-zones)<sup>2</sup>, and the following checklist:

- ✓ Has the Airline shared a comprehensive and frequently updated risk assessment accessible to Flight Crew members?
- ✓ Does your Airline provide a clear emergency contingency plan in case of airspace closure, ensuring safe accommodation for Flight Crews in Israel?
- ✓ What is the contingency plan in the event of airport bombings while the aircraft is performing a turnaround, with safe accommodations and 24/7 reachable contacts for Flight Crew members?
- ✓ Many insurance policies (personal life, mortgage, etc.) may not cover incidents in conflict zones. The company must provide additional insurance to Flight Crew members in writing.

Until further notice, FPU Romania, representing Pilots and Cabin Crew based in Romania, advises its members that they have the option to refuse to operate flights to Israel if they are not comfortable with the safety protocols provided. We are prepared to publicly address any attempts of intimidation and coercion to operate flights to a war zone and will pursue legal action if necessary.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Executions/StatementCommercialAirlinesConflictZones\\_Jan2021.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Executions/StatementCommercialAirlinesConflictZones_Jan2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eurocockpit.be/positions-publications/flights-and-over-conflict-zones>

