



International Civil Aviation Organization
MIDANPIRG/18 and RASG-MID/8 Meetings
(Virtual, 15 – 22 February 2021)

Agenda Item 5.2.5: Air Navigation Planning and Implementation/Proposal for Amendment (PFA) of the ICAO MID ANP - Volume I (Serial No.: MID ANP-I 20/01 – ATM/SAR), originated by Qatar

PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT (PFA) OF THE ICAO MID ANP - VOLUME I
(SERIAL NO.: MID ANP-I 20/01 – ATM/SAR)

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the results of the consultation on the proposal originated by Qatar for the amendment of the Air Navigation Plan — Middle East Region (Doc 9708, Volume I) (Serial No. MID ANP-I 20/01 – ATM/SAR). In the consultation with States and international organizations, objections were received from Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen. After further consultations, the objections by the aforementioned States remain. Accordingly, and as per procedure, the matter is tabled to be discussed by MIDANPIRG.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCES

- Procedure for the Amendment of Approved Regional Plans
- State Letter Ref.: AN 6/5A-20/009
- Proposal for Amendment (Serial No. MID ANP-I 20/01 – ATM/SAR)
- Assembly Resolution A40-4: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies and associated practices related specifically to air navigation*, Appendices G and H

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 12 January 2020, a proposal for the amendment of the Air Navigation Plan — Middle East Region (Doc 9708, Volume I), hereinafter referred to as “MID ANP”, concerning the establishment of a Doha flight information region (FIR) and Doha search and rescue region (SRR) (Serial No. MID ANP-I 20/01 – ATM/SAR), was circulated to States and international organizations for comments, in accordance with established procedures. Objections were received from Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen. After further consultations, the objections by the mentioned

States remained.

1.2 In accordance with the “Procedure for the Amendment of Regional Air Navigation Plans”, approved by ICAO Council on 18 June 2014, if any objection to a proposal is raised, and if the objection remains after further consultation, the matter will be documented for discussion by the respective planning and implementation regional group (PIRG) and, ultimately for formal consideration by the Air Navigation Commission, if it remains unresolved. If the Commission concludes that the amendment is acceptable in its original or other form, it will present appropriate recommendations to the Council.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In the MID ANP, the airspace over the territory of Qatar is included within the Bahrain FIR, with Bahrain providing air traffic services (ATS) except within the Doha terminal control area (TMA), which extends beyond the territory of Qatar with a vertical limit of flight level (FL) 245.

2.2 On 28 August 2018, Qatar submitted its proposal to the ICAO Middle East (MID) Regional Office for the establishment of a new FIR and SRR, namely Doha FIR and Doha SRR, which requires amendment to the Bahrain FIR and Bahrain SRR contained in the MID ANP.

2.3 Subsequent to the receipt of the Qatar’s proposal, the ICAO MID Regional Office established the Task Force on Qatar’s Amendment of MID Air Navigation Plan Proposal (QANPP TF), composed of Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and IATA. The main objective of the QANPP TF was to carry out coordination at regional level to reach a consensus on the way forward with respect to the Qatar’s proposal.

2.4 Two QANPP TF meetings were held (QANPP TF/1, 8 to 10 January 2019 and QANPP TF/2, 13 to 14 April 2019 at ICAO MID Office, Cairo, Egypt), in addition to bilateral discussions and coordination that took place for more than a year between ICAO and the parties concerned. However, universal agreement could not be reached between all the members of the task force, either on Qatar’s proposal or on any other proposal. Subsequently, on 28 October 2019, Qatar requested the circulation of the proposal, in accordance with ICAO procedures.

2.5 On 12 January 2020, the proposal at **Appendix A**, originated by Qatar, for the establishment of a Doha FIR and Doha SRR was circulated through ICAO MID Office’s State Letter (Ref.: AN 6/5A-20/009) to States and international organizations concerned for comments. Replies were received from thirteen States and one international organization as detailed below.

2.5.1 Objections to the proposal were raised by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen. Further consultation was subsequently completed with the States concerned, which reconfirmed their objections.

Position of Bahrain

2.5.1.1 Bahrain objected to the proposal, holding the view that the most optimum solution was to continue with the existing arrangement with no change to the FIR boundaries, which would continue to effectively meet short and long term regional requirements. Bahrain also held the view that Qatar had not presented technical, operational or safety considerations or improvements to current service levels that would justify proposed changes to the existing arrangements. The high-risk factors associated with the introduction of an additional ATS unit in a sophisticated, multi-conflict, high density, complex traffic area,

would impose unnecessary coordination between ATS units, increase controller-pilot workload and may in fact reduce the level of safety and efficiency levels and increase costs to users.

2.5.1.2 Bahrain recalled its pioneer role, longstanding experience and capabilities in providing ATS for over six decades of successful management and operation, in all areas of responsibilities within the Bahrain FIR. These services have been provided in a manner consistent with the Convention, its annexes as well as ICAO policy (Assembly Resolution A40-4 refers).

2.5.1.3 Bahrain acknowledged that the airspace above the Gulf would see a further increase in traffic, and would spare no effort in coping with such growth while maintaining a high level of safety and efficiency of air traffic in a cost-effective and environmentally-sound manner. Bahrain was fully committed to ensuring the safety and efficiency of air transport across the MID Region and to support ICAO's efforts in this regard. Bahrain also reiterated its offer to continue dialogue with all States in the region, including Qatar, under the auspices of ICAO, to make any specific improvements that are considered necessary to meet users' changing demands.

Position of Egypt

2.5.1.4 The Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority stated that Qatar's proposal contradicted ICAO's recommendations that call for seamless air traffic flows across FIRs. Any fragmentation of the FIRs would limit the intended seamless traffic flows. The Qatar's proposal was based on generic technical and operational thoughts that did not justify the proposal despite the current established FIR had proven its technical and operational competency for decades without any negative impact on flight safety.

Position of Saudi Arabia

2.5.1.5 Saudi Arabia indicated that the current arrangements for air traffic management are effective, efficient, and safe and should be maintained to meet traffic demands without any compromise on safety levels and efficiency. Saudi Arabia had the view that any splitting to the current airspace structure and organization would have a major impact on the traffic levels, achieved safety performance, and would result in a severe capacity reduction that would affect all adjacent FIRs and aviation growth in the region. Saudi Arabia reiterated the need for all stakeholders to adhere to the clauses of the ICAO air navigation policy and Assembly Resolution on airspace boundaries delineation, which should be established based on technical and operational considerations with the aim of ensuring safety and optimizing efficiency and economy for both service providers and users of the services. The proposal to establish a new FIR would add a layer of complexity with new hotspot areas and a reduction in the efficiency of air traffic management and may be a source of safety issues and of additional workload at the interface areas.

Position of United Arab Emirates (UAE)

2.5.1.6 UAE registered its objection to the proposal for amendment as it conflicted with the region's vision to ensure a safe and efficient flow of air traffic. The UAE carriers had registered their objections to the proposal with IATA too, as indicated in the summary of discussions of QANPP TF/2. Furthermore, UAE emphasized that the existing well-established FIR arrangements currently in place are fulfilling users and regional requirements in terms of safety, efficiency, capacity, and contingency measures. Therefore, the proposal submitted by Qatar would not bring any technical or operational benefits to the region that justifies any amendment to the MID ANP. On the contrary, it would jeopardize an already existing and mature operation in the area.

Position of Yemen

2.5.1.7 Yemen indicated in their response that the current arrangements for air traffic management are effective, efficient, and safe and any new FIR would result in a fragmented airspace, which would increase the complexity, and would deviate from the ICAO policies and principles on airspace delineation and harmonization.

2.5.2 The following is a summary of the responses received from other States and one international organization:

- Australia, Cyprus, Thailand and IFALPA indicated no objection to the proposal;
- Iran replied after the deadline supporting the proposal;
- Jordan accepted the proposal without comments;
- Russia reserved its right to reply after the deadline due late reception of the proposal, however, no further communication was subsequently received;
- Singapore had no position on the proposal; and
- United States responded with no comment.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to discuss the matter with the aim of resolving the objections raised by States as presented in 2.5.1 and take action as appropriate.

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**PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT OF THE AIR NAVIGATION PLAN —
MIDDLE EAST REGION, VOLUME I**

(Serial No. MID ANP-I 20/01 – ATM/SAR)

a) **Plan** *Air Navigation Plan - Middle East Region (Doc 9708, Volume I)*

b) **Proposed amendment:** Editorial note: Amendments are arranged to show “deleted text” using strikeout (~~text to be deleted~~), and “added text” with grey shading (text to be inserted).

Amend the list in the MID ANP Table GEN I-1 to add Doha FIR.

Add the requirements for Doha Flight Information Region (FIR) and Doha Search and Rescue Region (SRR) to the MID ANP Table ATM I-1 and Table SAR I-1, respectively, (cf. Charts: ATM I-1 and SAR I-1) in accordance with the following:

26°04'00"N 053°57'00"E 25°49'00"N 053°06'00"E 24°03'00"N 051°47'00"E 23°58'16"N 051°43'08"E 24°07'24"N 051°35'26"E 24°14'58"N 051°35'26"E 24°42'47"N 051°34'22"E 24°38'17"N 051°26'08"E 24°37'47"N 051°24'21"E 24°37'31"N 051°24'06"E then follow the limit of territorial waters and sovereign boundary between Qatar and Saudi Arabia then along the limit of Qatar/Bahrain territorial waters to 26°11'02"N 050°55'03"E 26°26'11"N 050°59'12"E 26°57'37"N 051°06'03"E 26°55'00"N 051°10'00"E 26°04'00"N 053°57'00"E

Amend the requirements for the boundary of Bahrain FIR and Bahrain SRR in accordance with the following:

... 28°44'00"N 049°40'00"E 27°05'00"N 050°55'00"E 26°57'37"N 051°06'03"E 26°55'00"N 051°10'00"E ~~26°04'00"N 053°57'00"E 25°49'00"N 053°06'00"E 26°26'11"N 050°59'12"E 26°11'02"N 050°55'03"E~~ then along the limit of Qatar/Bahrain territorial waters then follow sovereign boundary and limit of territorial waters between Qatar and Saudi Arabia to 24°37'31"N 051°24'06"E 24°37'47"N 051°24'21"E 24°38'17"N 051°26'08"E 24°42'47"N 051°34'22"E 24°14'58"N 051°35'26"E 24°07'24"N 051°35'26"E 23°58'16"N 051°43'08"E 24°03'00"N 051°47'00"E then follow sovereign boundary between Saudi Arabia and UAE to 22°42'00"N 055°12'00"E ...

c) **Originated by :** Qatar

d) **Originators' reasons for amendment:** The current FIR boundaries contained in *Air Navigation Plan — Middle East Region (Doc 9708)* no longer serve the best interests of flight operations in the Region, and need to be updated. In developing the proposal the following was considered: the anticipated future air traffic flow and nature of the route structure, the need for efficient air navigation services, delineation of airspace boundaries by straight lines where practicable, optimum location of transfer of control points, the most efficient coordination procedures ensuring that flying on international air routes is carried out under uniform conditions as far as practicable, and the ability of all ATS provider States to furnish the required services without undue efforts.
The proposed amendment aims to enhance safety, and improve the efficiency and economy of flight operations through the following operational benefits that also represent a major contribution towards alignment with the objectives of the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan:

- a) reduction of complexity and coordination related to traffic to and from Qatar airports and simplification at interfaces;
- b) improved sectorization design ensuring optimized approach and departure procedures and trajectories to/from Qatar;
- c) improved coordination between civil and military stakeholders sharing airspace within the boundaries of the proposed FIR, including the introduction of FUA procedures ensuring optimum use of airspace and potential implementation of additional ATS routes and conditional routes;
- d) facilitate traffic flow with less restrictions, including opportunities to define additional user preferred routes, and support continuous climb and descent operations (CCO and CDO);
- e) facilitate the seamless provision of ATS services within the whole vertical stratum above Qatar;
- f) facilitate opportunities to accommodate direct routings without ACC coordination with third ACC;
- g) optimized integration of regional network of traffic flows to/from Qatar with Bahrain departures to the east and north-east;
- h) optimal distribution of work load between Bahrain ACC and Qatar ATS units. Performance of air navigation operations can be maximized by means of the deployment of state of the art CNS/ATM infrastructures, providing opportunities for mutual support, including with respect to contingency planning and implementation;
- i) provide an operational environment conducive to handling future regional traffic growth in the most effective manner;
- j) remove reliance on delegation of air navigation services outside of Qatar, coordination of which has proved historically challenging, thereby simplifying regulatory oversight, regulation, air traffic control service provision and, in some instances, coordination; and
- k) alignment of FIR and SRR boundaries, simplifying overall ATS and SAR responsibilities, and taking the opportunity to support the provisions of effective SAR services more directly from facilities available to Qatar covering the whole proposed FIR/SRR.

e) **Intended date of implementation :** As soon as possible after approval by the Council and completion of the appropriate letters of agreement.

f) Proposal circulated to the following Sates and International Organizations:

Australia	Malta	IATA
Algeria	Morocco	IFALPA
Bahrain	Netherlands	IFATCA
Belgium	Oman	
Brazil	Pakistan	
Canada	Qatar (<i>For information purposes only</i>)	
China	Russian Federation	
Cyprus	Saudi Arabia	
Egypt	Singapore	
Ethiopia	South Africa	
France	South Korea	
Germany	Spain	
Greece	Sudan	
India	Syrian Arab Republic	
Islamic Republic of Iran	Thailand	
Italy	Tunisia	
Iraq	Turkey	
Japan	United Arab Emirates	
Jordan	United Kingdom	
Kuwait	United States	
Lebanon	Yemen	
Libya	ACAO	
Malaysia	CANSO	

g) Secretariat comments:

Subsequent to Qatar submitting its proposal to ICAO in August 2018 to amend the MID Air Navigation Plan with the inclusion of a Doha flight information region, the ICAO MID Office established the Task Force on Qatar's Amendment of MID Air Navigation Plan Proposal (QANPP TF), composed of Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and IATA. The main objective of the Task Force was to carry out formal coordination at the regional level to reach a consensus on the way forward with respect to the submitted proposal by Qatar.

Two meetings of the Task Force were held (QANPP TF/1, 8 to 10 January 2019 and QANPP TF/2, 13 to 14 April 2019 at ICAO MID Office, Cairo, Egypt), as well as bilateral discussions and coordination that took place for more than a year between ICAO and the parties concerned. However, universal agreement could not be reached between all the members of the Task Force, either on Qatar's proposal or on any other proposal.

Subsequently, on 28 October 2019, Qatar requested the circulation of the amendment proposal herein, in accordance with ICAO procedures.

Consequential Proposals for Amendment to Volumes II and III of the MID Air Navigation Plan are expected to be submitted and processed subsequent to finalization of the current proposal for amendment to Volume I.

Proposed Amendment MID ANP 20/01 - ATM/SAR

