



# Military Action in the Middle East

## IATA Guidance: JNUS

### Situation

The aviation industry is experiencing significant and ongoing disruption as a result of military action and heightened security risks across parts of the Middle East, with impacts extending well beyond the immediate conflict zones.

These developments have resulted in:

- **Airspace closures and restrictions**, including the closure of FIRs or the issuance of NOTAMs and state advisories recommending or mandating avoidance of affected airspace.
- **Temporary or prolonged airport closures**, curfews, or severe operational limitations at airports within or adjacent to affected regions.
- **Rapidly changing security and regulatory conditions**, creating substantial uncertainty for airline operational planning.

In response, airlines have been required to suspend, cancel, reroute, or significantly adjust flights at short notice to comply with safety requirements, regulatory advisories, and insurance limitations. These circumstances are unforeseeable, unavoidable, and entirely outside the control of airlines.

### Airline impacts

The impacts include effects on both directly affected flights and indirectly affected services, with knock-on consequences extending across airline networks beyond the routes directly concerned.

Airlines may be unable to operate scheduled services due to:

- Airspace closures or restrictions along the planned route, with no safe or viable alternative routing.
- Closure or reduced operational capability of airports of departure or arrival, including the imposition of curfews or capacity reductions.
- State, military, or aviation authority advisories recommending or mandating avoidance of affected regions.
- Insurance or war risk limitations preventing operation.

In addition, military action in one region can lead to wider network disruption, including aircraft and crew displacement, breakdowns in planned rotations, and the loss of connecting services, resulting in cancellations at airports far removed from the original disruption.

### Planning Uncertainty and Recovery Challenges

Airlines are operating in an environment of exceptional and ongoing uncertainty, characterized by rapidly changing operating conditions, limited forward visibility, and the need to prioritize safety and regulatory compliance.

Recovery from such events is not immediate. Even after airspace or airports reopen, airlines require time to reposition aircraft and crews, rebuild schedules, and restore network integrity. As a result, both directly and indirectly affected services may remain unable to operate for a reasonable recovery period.

## Applicability of Justified Non-Utilization of Slots (JNUS)

Under WASG Section 8.8, Justified Non-Utilization of Slots applies where non-operation results from unforeseeable and unavoidable causes outside the airline's control. The circumstances arising from military action in the Middle East clearly meet this threshold.

JNUS eligibility should therefore apply to:

- Flights directly affected by airspace or airport closures or restrictions.
- Flights indirectly affected through aircraft displacement, rotation breakdowns, or loss of network connectivity.
- Cancellations taken in advance to mitigate safety, operational, or customer impacts.
- A defined recovery period necessary to restore normal operations.

## Recommendations

To ensure a consistent, fair, and harmonized application of slot rules, the following approach is recommended:

- JNUS eligibility should be granted at either end of an affected route.
- Official NOTAMs, state advisories, and security assessments should be considered authoritative justification.
- Coordinators should recognise network-wide impacts, not solely the immediate cancellation cause.
- Coordinators are urged to retain WASG flexibility and to refrain from applying retime or monitoring rules that would treat necessary rerouting and network adjustments as not operated.
- JNUS should be granted for the duration of the disruption, plus a reasonable recovery window, with flexibility where conditions remain unstable.
- Airlines should be prepared to provide supporting documentation upon request, including:
  - Relevant NOTAMs or advisories.
  - Evidence of aircraft displacement or network disruption.
  - Mitigation measures taken, such as rerouting or schedule adjustments.
- Coordinators should provide clear reasoning where JNUS eligibility cannot be approved and engage constructively with airlines to reach agreement.
- Where agreement cannot be reached, the Coordination Committee (or equivalent body) should be invited to provide guidance.

## Contact

For further information or discussion regarding this guidance, please contact: [slots@iata.org](mailto:slots@iata.org)