



Homeland Security

May 13, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Chao:

As you know, pursuant to section 44907(e) of title 49, United States Code (U.S.C.), if it is determined that “(1) a condition exists that threatens the safety or security of passengers, aircraft, or crew traveling to or from [a foreign] airport; and (2) the public interest requires an immediate suspension of transportation between the United States and that airport,” all flights shall be suspended to and from that foreign airport.

As we discussed, I have concluded that conditions in Venezuela threaten the safety and security of passengers, aircraft, and crew traveling to or from that country, and that the public interest requires an immediate suspension of all commercial passenger and cargo flights between the United States and Venezuela. My conclusion is based on several prevailing factors, which include the following:

- (1) reports of civil unrest and violence in and around the airports;
- (2) the inability of TSA to gain access to Venezuelan airports to conduct required security assessments to determine whether adequate security measures are in place.
- (3) the current economic and political crisis in Venezuela;
- (4) cancellation of flights to Venezuela by American Airlines, the largest air carrier providing service, and two other carriers;
- (5) the U.S. Department of State’s publication of Do Not Travel advisories, suspension of Embassy operations, and recommendation that Transportation Security Administration (TSA) inspectors not enter the country owing to safety concerns;
- (6) the Federal Aviation Administration’s issuance of a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) on May 1, 2019, which prohibits all flight operations by U.S. air carriers and commercial operators in Venezuela airspace below FL 260; and
- (7) the risk of Maduro regime actions against U.S. citizens and U.S. interests located in Venezuela.

Per our discussion, we have agreed that the rights of U.S. and foreign air carriers to provide foreign air transportation between the United States and Venezuela should be suspended pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 44907(e), and the Secretary of State has approved such action. Therefore, I request that you effectuate such determination by issuing an order suspending the rights of U.S. and foreign air carriers to provide foreign air transportation between the United States and Venezuela. Affected carriers known to TSA are listed on Attachment 1; such list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Further, although public notice of a suspension of air carrier rights is not required under 49 U.S.C. § 44907(e), I believe that providing such notice would be prudent and in the interest of informing the public. Accordingly, TSA will require aircraft operators to provide written notice to each passenger with a flight itinerary that originates in, transfers or transits through, or has a final destination of any airport in Venezuela, advising that conditions in Venezuela currently present a threat to the traveling public. TSA will also publish a notice in the Federal Register, advise the media, Federal departments and agencies, Congressional offices, and other necessary parties, and will provide travel advisory signage to domestic airports.

If and when the conditions in Venezuela change and TSA is able to assess airport security, we have agreed to revisit the above determination and the action taken under section 44907(e). Until further notice, however, we have agreed that the flight suspensions should remain in effect indefinitely.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. McAleenan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary

Enclosure:

List of Air Carriers with Service to Venezuela

Enclosure 1 – List of Carriers with Service to Venezuela

Four U.S. Aircraft Operators have service to Venezuela

- Eastern Airlines
- Swift Air
- Caribbean Sun Airlines
- Skylease Cargo

Three U.S. Aircraft Operators have voluntarily suspended service to Venezuela

- American Airlines
- Amerijet International
- 21 Air

Three Foreign Air Carriers have service to Venezuela

- Avior Airlines
- DHL Aero Expreso
- Transcarga International Airways