

Crew Member Security Aspects of an Operator's Security Programme

Background

Air traffic is a worldwide business. Commercial flights are sometimes operated into areas and destinations where the security situation is very difficult to predict. Moreover, the situation in any country has the potential to change rapidly due to a sudden terrorist attack, civil unrest or a natural disaster which can put both security and safety under threat. When this happens, crew members who are in transit or on a layover can find themselves in the front line. One such example was the abduction of two Turkish Airlines pilots near Beirut's international airport in August 2013. The crew and some passengers were on their way to the crew hotel, when several armed men stopped their bus and took the pilots with them. The abduction, whose motivation was remotely related to the Syrian conflict, lasted more than two months.

Appendix 24 of ICAO Doc 8973, the Security Manual, has detailed provisions on the essential components of an operator's security programme, such as procedures for responding to threat information/notification, related additional security and protection measures for aircraft and crew, and responsibilities for implementation.

Conclusion

Whilst IFALPA supports the above paragraph, the Federation believes that these guidelines, which directly affect crew members' security, should become standards, and that any operator security programme should, as a minimum:

1. Ensure a risk assessment of new destinations and continuous threat assessment and risk management of the routes, destinations and en-route alternate aerodromes;
2. Clearly state that each flight should be subject to the decision of the pilot-in-command; taking account of all the latest available intelligence provided
3. Include security measures for crew members during transits and layovers, including but not limited to transport to and from the hotel. These measures should be based on risk assessment and threat analysis;
4. Include provisions for extracting crews in specific circumstances such as civil unrest or a natural disaster;
5. Include procedures for responding to information that indicates that a specific aircraft may be the target of an act of unlawful interference;
6. Indicate who is responsible for implementing the additional security measures considered necessary to counter a threat; and
7. Assign responsibility for informing the appropriate authority of the situation in the event that threat notification originates with another source.