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FAA Continues Heightened Airspace Warnings for Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Other Caribbean Destinations

FAA advisories for the San Juan Flight Information Region run through Feb. 2, urging caution for flights serving Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with notices also covering Aruba, Curaçao, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, and Barbados.

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A United Airlines jet arriving at the Luis Munoz Marin International Airport in San Juan, Puerto Rico on Dec. 16, 2025. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Residents and travelers in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are facing heightened aviation precautions as federal authorities continue to warn of potential risks in regional airspace tied to

ongoing U.S. military activity connected to Venezuela, prompting airlines and pilots to operate under elevated security advisories.

The Federal Aviation Administration has maintained a cautionary notice for the San Juan Flight Information Region, which includes Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, advising aircraft operators to exercise extreme care at all altitudes. The advisory stems from U.S. military operations that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on January 3, and remains in effect through February 2, 2026, under NOTAM KICZ A0008/26. According to the FAA, the notice applies to overflights, arrivals, and departures due to potential threats arising from military activity in the region.

The FAA's warning covers airspace serving major travel hubs such as Cyril E. King Airport and Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport. In the immediate aftermath of the January 3 operation, hundreds of flights were canceled at these and other Caribbean airports, leaving thousands of passengers stranded and disrupting routine travel, including back-to-school returns for students from islands such as Puerto Rico.

While a temporary 24-hour airspace closure imposed after the operation has since been lifted, pilots have been cautioned to remain alert for hazards such as GPS interference and other navigation issues associated with regional tensions. Airlines reassessed flight paths serving popular Caribbean destinations, including St. Thomas and San Juan, as they evaluated safety conditions following the military action.

The U.S. operation on January 3 involved special operations forces conducting raids in Caracas to apprehend Maduro and his wife on narco-terrorism charges, along with airstrikes targeting Venezuelan air defense systems and infrastructure. President Donald Trump described the mission as a law enforcement effort aimed at addressing drug trafficking, though the action drew international criticism for being unilateral. Reports indicated the operation resulted in approximately 75 deaths, including Venezuelan and Cuban personnel, as well as minor civilian casualties.

In response to the strikes, the FAA initially prohibited U.S. aircraft from entering Venezuelan airspace and adjacent Caribbean zones, citing safety concerns. The resulting disruption rippled across the eastern Caribbean, causing widespread flight cancellations and delays. Although major carriers such as American and Delta resumed service once restrictions eased, residual delays continued into the following week.

Beyond the San Juan region, similar FAA advisories remain in effect for other parts of the Caribbean. The Curacao Flight Information Region, which includes Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao, is covered under NOTAM KICZ A0009/26, while the western portion of the Piarco Flight Information Region—encompassing Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, and Barbados—is subject to NOTAM KICZ A0010/26. These notices warn of potential spillover effects from Venezuelan military responses and ongoing U.S. activities.

On January 16, the FAA expanded its warnings to include portions of Mexico, Central America, and South America, as well as certain overwater routes in the eastern Pacific, extending advisories for up to 60 days. The agency cited the possibility of further military actions and navigation disruptions, noting an escalation of U.S. naval operations in the region since late 2025. In response, some airlines have adjusted operations, including rerouting flights to avoid areas deemed higher risk.

Aviation experts have observed that while the initial wave of cancellations and confusion has largely subsided, the continued advisories reflect ongoing geopolitical instability. Such conditions, they note, carry implications for tourism-dependent economies in both the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, where air travel plays a critical role in sustaining visitor arrivals.

Travelers are being encouraged to stay informed by checking directly with their airlines and consulting the FAA's NOTAM database for the latest updates. Officials caution that the situation remains fluid, with no immediate resolution to the Venezuela-related tensions that prompted the heightened aviation alerts.

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