

International airlines suspend flights to Iran amid protests

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: A number of international airlines have suspended or cancelled flights to and from Iran as nationwide anti-government protests enter third week, compounded by a near-total internet blackout and heightened security concerns.

UAE-based carriers have been among those affected. Flydubai cancelled all scheduled services to Iranian cities on January 9, including flights to Tehran, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Bandar Abbas. Emirates suspended multiple services to Tehran and other destinations, while Etihad Airways also halted flights to Iran.

Qatar Airways cancelled services between Doha and Tehran, and Turkish Airlines, Ajet, and Pegasus Airlines suspended or cancelled dozens of flights to Tehran, Tabriz, Mashhad, Isfahan, and Shiraz.

Austrian Airlines cancelled its January 9 service between Vienna and Tehran and said it is monitoring the situation. Lufthansa, which had earlier suspended its Tehran route due to regional security concerns, had planned to resume flights on January 16, but that schedule is now under renewed uncertainty.

Iran has been experiencing waves of protests since late December, beginning on Dec. 28 at Tehran's Grand Bazaar over the sharp depreciation of the Iranian rial and worsening economic conditions. Demonstrations later spread to several other cities across the country.

Iranian authorities have not released official casualty figures. However, the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) reported on the 12th day of the protests that 42 people had been killed, including 8 security personnel, with dozens injured and 2,277 arrested.

Iranian domestic carriers continue to operate inside the country. Iran's Civil Aviation Organization has issued airspace restrictions near sensitive areas, and several governments have warned airlines of heightened risks. A series of active Notices to Air Missions (NOTAMs) issued recently indicated increased defensive measures across multiple parts of the country.

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