

## Iran war drops nearly 27 million footfalls across nine Middle East airports

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**Dhaka: Nine Middle Eastern airports collectively lost an estimated 27 million passengers and up to USD 1 billion in revenue during the two months following the outbreak of the Iran war, according to an analysis by the Airports Council International Asia-Pacific & Middle East (ACI APAC & MID).**

The report, published on May 13 in collaboration with Flare Aviation Consulting, covers the period from February 28 to April 30. ACI said the nine unnamed airports suffered a "disproportionate and sustained burden" because of their position as one of the world's most critical transport corridors.

The airports collectively handled 324 million passengers in 2025, equivalent to roughly 540,000 per day. During the two-month period, daily traffic collapsed to just 97,000. Approximately 27 million

passengers did not travel as planned, representing a 54% decline year-on-year.

Operations across the nine airports averaged just 53% of pre-conflict scheduled flights throughout March and April, with a low of 32% recorded on the first day of the conflict.

ACI estimated the revenue shortfall at USD 900 million to USD 1 billion, labeling the financial impact a "loss of exceptional magnitude."

Looking ahead, airfares to and from the Middle East in July and August 2026 are already averaging 50% above pre-conflict levels, primarily driven by reduced airline competition. Meanwhile, jet fuel prices remain nearly double pre-conflict levels, though fuel stocks remain stable for most airports.

There were tentative signs of stabilization by late April, when operations climbed to approximately 63% of scheduled capacity.

Stefano Baronci, Director General of ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East, highlighted the disruption as a stark reminder of airports' critical role in enabling connectivity and socio-economic growth. He cautioned that prolonged instability through the summer could more severely threaten the economic sustainability of the airport sector.

Baronci also urged that public policy avoid compounding the financial strain, noting existing pressures including rising jet fuel costs, longer flight routes due to geopolitical tensions, persistent supply bottlenecks, and elevated inflation.

ACI warned that airspace restrictions, security risks, and high fuel prices are likely to continue depressing demand and capacity, adding that recovery will hinge on coordinated airspace reopening, clearer regulatory guidance, fuel market stabilization, and airlines' ability to rebuild their networks and restore passenger confidence.