

Etihad Airways suspends flights to Israel

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dubai: UAE flag carrier Etihad Airways had cancelled flights between Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv since October 8. “Etihad continues its policy of vigilance and ongoing review and is monitoring the situation closely through liaison with regulatory authorities and continuous intelligence reports,” Etihad said in a statement.

The Dubai carrier flydubai had to cancel two flights - FZ 1625/1626 and FZ 1807/1808 - on Saturday (October 7) but resumed operations next day, with plans to adjust schedules as needed. “We will continue to monitor the situation closely and amend our schedule accordingly,” said an airline spokesperson.

Emirates airline, which operates three daily flights to Tel Aviv, is maintaining its regular schedule. An airline spokesperson said, “We have been closely monitoring the situation in Israel since it began, and we are in close contact with the relevant authorities regarding developments. The situation is dynamic, and we are carefully reviewing all factors on an hour-by-hour basis.”

The UAE initiated direct flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport following the signing of the Abraham Accords in September 2020.

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According to Ranjit Peter, Business Head Air MEA at TBO.com, “There is an anticipation of potential flight disruptions, temporary suspensions, or reroutes. Direct flights between the UAE and Israel were significant for both leisure and business purposes.”

Dubai has welcomed 209,000 visitors from Israel, making it the 10th largest source market for inbound tourism until summer 2023. This represents a significant increase of 71 per cent compared to same period in 2022, according to Dubai Tourism. For the same period, in Abu Dhabi, Israel became the 11th-largest source market, with 9,000 checking into its hotels.

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