

Royal Jordanian, Lufthansa suspend Beirut operations

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Beirut: Dozens of passengers at Lebanon's only international airport were anxiously checking announcement boards yesterday as more flights to the capital were cancelled or delayed amid escalating hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.

Beirut International Airport was functioning but many passengers were stuck as major airlines announced flight suspensions, after Israel and Hezbollah announced broad strikes in an escalation of cross-border hostilities.

"We came at 4:30 am (0130 GMT) for our flight at 8:00 am but they told us it was cancelled," said Elham Shukair, a passenger headed to the United States via Jordan.

Seated on her bag in the arrivals hall, she said she had booked another flight later yesterday with Lebanon's Middle East Airlines in the hope of

reaching Amman and making her onward connection.

other passengers sat on the floor in the departures hall as screens showed cancelled or delayed flights, while the arrivals area was largely empty.

“Our flight is still scheduled but it is delayed,” said Diala Hatoum, who was set to travel with her son.

“We will see, we are waiting now,” she added.

Passengers at Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport also faced uncertainty after aviation authorities delayed or redirected flights. The airport resumed operations from 7:00 am (0400 GMT) following a brief suspension, but dozens of passengers were left stranded after some flights were cancelled or delayed. Air France and its subsidiary Transavia said they were suspending flights to Beirut and Tel Aviv scheduled for Sunday and Monday, adding that the move could be extended depending on the situation in the Middle East. Royal Jordanian Airlines announced the suspension of Beirut flights “due to the current situation”.

The UAE’s Etihad Airways said it had also cancelled its services yesterday to and from Beirut and Tel Aviv.

German airline giant Lufthansa said it was extending a suspension of flights to Beirut until September 30 and to Tel Aviv until September 2. Lebanon’s civil aviation authority emphasised yesterday that “the airport is functioning normally” despite some disruptions.

There is “no truth” to rumours that all flights have been cancelled, said a statement from the authority carried by the official National News Agency.

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