

U.S. bars pilots and planes from flying in Venezuelan airspace



Washington, May 2 (RHC)-- The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued an order prohibiting U.S. air operators from flying below 7,900 meters (about 26,000 feet) in Venezuela's airspace until further notice, citing "increasing political instability and tensions."

The FAA notice said any air operators currently in Venezuela, which would include private jets, should depart within 48 hours. The Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido on Tuesday made his strongest call yet to the military in order to help him oust President Nicolas Maduro; however, his coup failed within hours.

According to the Reuters News Agency, the American Airlines Group Inc. in March said it was indefinitely suspending its flights to Venezuela. OPSGROUP, which provides safety guidance to air operators, said options for those choosing to avoid Venezuelan airspace would include routes west via Colombia, or east via Guyana.

"The (FAA) order comes on a day of an information battle waged between Maduro and Guaido, and although the coup status is uncertain, one thing is clear: taking your aircraft to Venezuela is not a good idea," OPSGROUP said on its website.

Flight tracking service FlightRadar24 has shown some flights between South America and Europe were crossing Venezuelan airspace, but at altitudes above 26,000 feet.

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