

MANAGEMENT

U.S.-Mideast Tensions Put Business Travel on Notice

By Elizabeth West & Lauren Arena / January 15, 2026

The Trump administration on Thursday seemed to back off rhetoric from earlier in the week that positioned the United States to begin military action against Iran, but some countries in recent days have increased travel warning levels and some carriers have canceled or limited service to the Middle East.

The U.S. had been building a case to respond to Iran's lethal crackdown that, according to reports, has killed at least 2,400 people in an attempt to quell mass anti-government demonstrations that have rocked Iran since late December. White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt told reporters today that the U.S. has not put military scenarios aside, but the administration has backed off immediate action after receiving reports that Iran has held off additional executions amid mounting U.S. pressure.

"The president and his team have communicated to the Iranian regime that if the killing continues, there will be grave consequences," Leavitt told the White House press room. Numerous news outlets also have reported, however, that Israeli and Turkish leaders have been in contact with the president, asking him to hold off on strikes as Iran would be likely to engage them in local retaliations.

Impact on Travel

Iranian officials closed the country's air space on Wednesday night but reopened it today. Regardless, the U.S. has maintained a do-not-travel recommendation for Iran since Dec. 5. It has no consular presence in the country. The United Kingdom on Wednesday updated its position in Iran, withdrawing all staff and operating the embassy remotely. Canada today updated its travel warnings to the highest level and reiterated on its travel website that the country had very limited consular activity operating out of Turkiye. France, Germany, Ireland and Italy—among other European nations—similarly have increased travel warning levels to Iran in recent days.

The Lufthansa Group, which also owns Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Swiss and Eurowings and holds a minority stake in Italy's ITA Airways, suspended flights to the Iranian capital Tehran until Jan. 28, according to media reports.

Additionally, **Bloomberg reported** that the group from Jan. 15-19 will operate flights to and from Tel Aviv and Amman during the day to prevent crews from staying overnight.

Security and duty-of-care solutions provider Global Guardian on Wednesday, working from intelligence that American strikes on Iran would be "likely in the coming days," advised delaying all non-essential travel to the

region. The pullback in rhetoric, which is possibly temporary, doesn't change that advice.

Global Guardian also cautioned organizations with assets or personnel in the region to monitor the political situation and access contingency plans as "further flight cancellations and disruptions cannot be ruled out in the near term."

It also advised foreign nationals in Iran to leave the country by land—via Armenia or Turkiye—and warned in-country travelers to avoid all protest sites and limit outdoor activities.

Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, Emirates and other global airlines have canceled flights to the Tehran as tension built with the U.S. Action or threats may re-escalate, according to Global Guardian leading to additional airlift restrictions, flight cancellations and suspensions.



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