



**WORKING PAPER**

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 Facilitation Regional Group (AVSEC/FAL/RG/8)  
 Mexico City, Mexico, 13 to 17 August 2018**

**Agenda Item 9                      Other Business**

**PROMOTION OF THE PROTOCOL TO AMEND THE CONVENTION ON  
 OFFENSES AND CERTAIN OTHER ACTS COMMITTED ON BOARD AIRCRAFT  
 DONE AT MONTREAL ON 4 APRIL 2014 (MONTREAL PROTOCOL 2014)**

(Presented by IATA)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Unruly and disruptive passenger incidents have become a significant issue jeopardizing flight safety and security. During ICAO Diplomatic Conference in April 2014, States recognized the significance of this issue and the need to strengthen international air law, and approved the Montreal Protocol 2014 (MP14), recognizing that the Tokyo Convention of 1963 it is no longer a sufficient legal framework, because of jurisdiction deficiencies and lack of clarity on what constitutes an infraction. However, MP14 will only enter into force when 22 States have ratified it.

This paper calls on all States to expedite the ratification of MP14, which along with industry initiatives will help to tackle the growing prevalence and severity of unruly passenger incidents.

<b>Action:</b>	Suggested actions are presented in Section 3.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aviation Security and Facilitation</li> </ul>
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocol to Amend the Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, done at Montréal on 4 April 2014 (Doc 10034)</li> <li>• Circular 288: <i>Guidance Material on the Legal Aspects of Unruly/Disruptive Passengers</i></li> </ul>

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Ensuring the safe, secure and efficient operation of commercial flights is the shared goal of governments, airlines and the wider aviation industry. However, unruly passenger incidents on board aircraft that threaten safety and security have become a significant issue faced by airlines, flight and cabin crew on a daily basis.

1.2 The behaviour of the small minority of unruly passengers also adversely affects the travel experience of the passengers, causes operational disruption and leads to significant costs for airlines.

1.3 Unruly behaviour includes assault of other passengers or crew, sexual abuse or harassment, illegal consumption of narcotics, refusal to comply with safety instructions, making threats that could affect the safety of the crew, passengers and aircraft and other types of disorderly behaviour that impact good order and discipline on board.

1.4 Since 2007, IATA has collected statistics on unruly passengers from the Safety Trend Evaluation Analysis and Data Exchange System (STEADES), a database owned and managed by IATA to which 150 airlines submit periodic reports on a non-discriminatory basis. It is likely that the statistics significantly underestimate the extent of the problem

1.5 Statistics from STEADES on unruly passenger incidents in 2016 are shown in Appendix A. In 2016, there was an average of 1 unruly passenger incident per 1,434 flights. While this is a slight reduction versus 2015 (1 incident for every 1,205 flights), the proportion of serious (level 2) incidents that involve physical confrontation with other passengers or crew increased from 11% to 12%. Together with the statistics from individual civil aviation authorities and feedback from member airlines, this data suggests that unruly passenger incidents have become more prevalent.

1.6 To address this issue, IATA has set out a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach that should be adopted including:

- *Enhanced international deterrent* - by ensuring States have the necessary legal tools to be able to enforce criminal or other sanctions as appropriate so that unruly passengers are held to account for their misconduct.
- *Prevention and management* – by ensuring airlines and other stakeholders take measures to prevent unruly incidents and manage incidents effectively when they do happen through guidance, training and the sharing of best-practice.

1.7 States recognized that the existing Tokyo Convention 1963 (TC63) no longer provides a sufficient legal framework for dealing with unruly passenger behaviour due to jurisdictional gaps and the lack of clarity as to what constitutes an offense. Consequently, the Montreal Protocol 2014 (MP14) was adopted by States at a Diplomatic Conference on 4 April 2014. It significantly improves the ability of States to expand jurisdiction over offenses to the State of the Operator and the State of Landing.

1.8 To bring it into force, at least 22 States must accede, accept or ratify MP 14. So far, 30 States have signed and fourteen States have ratified it. A number of States are in the final stages of the process to become Parties and IATA's best estimate is that MP14 will enter in to force by the end of 2019.

## 2 Background

2.1 **Extension of jurisdiction** – a key issue is that currently a significant number of unruly passengers rarely face prosecution or other legal or economic sanction because of jurisdictional issues. Some countries lack specific provisions in their relevant laws to allow for the arrest and prosecution of unruly passengers even when jurisdiction is not an issue

2.2 TC63 grants jurisdiction over offenses and other acts committed on board aircraft to the State of registration of the aircraft in question. This causes issues when the Captain of the aircraft delivers or disembarks an unruly Passenger to the competent authorities who may determine that they do not have jurisdiction (as the State of landing) when the aircraft is registered in another state. Likewise, the police and authorities in the State of registration may have little connection with an incident taking place in another country. The result is that the unruly passengers are often released and allowed to continue their journey without facing any sanctions for their misconduct.

2.3 MP14 addresses legal gaps by providing States with a clearer jurisdictional framework for dealing with unruly passengers, whilst preserving prosecutorial discretion. Specifically:

- a) MP14 gives mandatory jurisdiction to the intended State of landing (the scheduled destination). However, two safeguards were included to reflect the concerns of some States on legal certainty and proportionality. Firstly, the offense must be sufficiently serious i.e. where the safety of the aircraft or of persons or property therein, or good order and discipline on board is jeopardized. Secondly, the State of landing must consider if the offence is an offence in the State of the operator.
- b) MP14 establishes mandatory jurisdiction of the State of the operator. This takes account of the increasing trend toward dry leasing aircraft where the State of aircraft registration is not necessarily the State of the operator.

## 2.4 Definition of Offenses

- a) MP14 clarifies certain behaviours which should be considered, at a minimum, as offenses and encourages States to take appropriate criminal or other legal proceedings. These include physical assault or a threat to commit such assault against a crew member and refusal to follow a lawful instruction given by or on behalf of the aircraft Commander (for safety purposes). The elaboration of the types of conduct prohibited will improve legal certainty.
- b) Likewise, ICAO has produced a series of documents that are available for States to adopt them as guidance material for internal purposes, like Circular 288 - *Guidance Material on the Legal Aspects of Unruly/Disruptive Passengers*. This Circular has been updated and will be published as an ICAO Manual towards the end of 018.

2.5 **Right of Recourse** – Airlines usually have to bear the costs incurred as a result of unruly passenger incidents and these can be substantial, in some instances over US\$200,000. MP14 recognizes that airlines may have a right to seek compensation for costs incurred as a result of unruly passenger behaviour. The presence of this clause should have strong deterrent value.

2.6 Taken together with the operational measures already being implemented by airlines and other stakeholders to prevent and manage unruly incidents, when widely ratified, MP14 will provide a more effective deterrent by making the consequences of such behaviour clear and enforceable. This will lead to a safer and a more pleasant air travel experience for all.

## 3 Suggested actions

3.1 In developing MP14, States recognized “the escalation of the severity and frequency of unruly behaviour on board aircraft that may jeopardize the safety of the aircraft or of persons or property therein or jeopardize good order and discipline on board.”

3.2 While recognizing competing domestic legislative priorities, IATA urges States to prioritize the ratification of MP14 to put in place an international legal instrument which gives the international community the means to deal with unruly passengers more effectively, and to deter future incidents.