



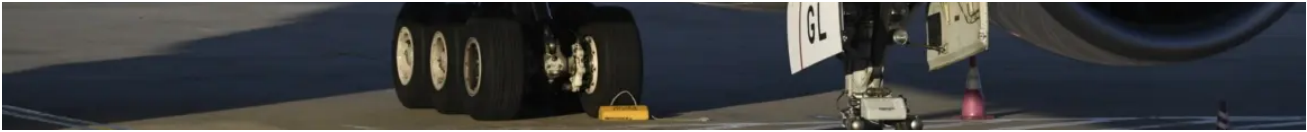
Emirates Suspends Flights to Nigeria After Schedule Slashed

by **Pranjal Pande** · December 12, 2021 · 19 shares · 2 minute read

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One week after Emirates [restarted flights](#) to Nigeria, the carrier has been forced to cut flights again. The latest suspension comes after regulators slashed the airline's 21 weekly services to just one. The move is a response to UAE authorities not permitting Nigerian carrier Air Peace to fly to Sharjah thrice-weekly.





Emirates has indefinitely suspended flights and likely will not resume services under a new schedule is agreed upon. Photo: Getty Images

Here we go again

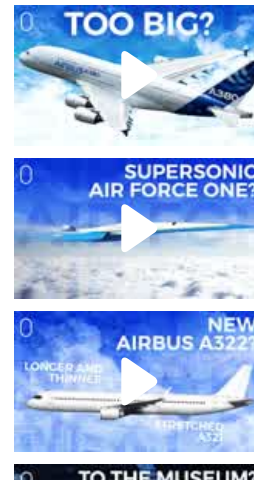
Exactly five days after Emirates resumed flights to Abuja and Lagos, the airline was [hit with new restrictions](#) by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA). On 10th December, the NCAA ordered that Emirates will only be allowed to fly a once-weekly service in Abuja on Thursdays. This is down from the 21 weekly flights approved when services restarted.

The Dubai-based carrier has responded in kind, according to [Reuters](#). Starting Monday, 13th December, Emirates will suspend flights to Nigeria indefinitely. The end of flights brings to an end a seven-day ceasefire the two sides reached after flight bans were [first enforced in March](#).

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Emirates has long been looking for a way to restart flights but has faced roadblocks on issues like testing and entry bans. Photo: Emirates

In a statement, the carrier said,

“With the recently imposed directive limiting Emirates to operate one flight per week to Nigeria via Abuja, Emirates will be suspending its flights between Nigeria and Dubai from 13th December 2021, until the UAE and Nigerian authorities work on a solution to the ongoing issue.”

Why this time?

It's no secret that the [Emirates' permission to fly to Nigeria](#) is rooted in politics. The latest suspension is a result of an ongoing slot dispute between the UAE and Nigeria. In particular, schedules were slashed after [Air Peace was given a once-weekly slot](#) to fly to Sharjah Airport despite requesting three.

This infuriated Nigerian authorities, which reciprocally cut Emirates down to one weekly flight. In a statement to [AirInsight](#), NCAA Director-General Captain Musa Nuhu said,

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“The Nigerian Government was gracious to grant Emirates Airlines 21 frequencies it requested for...However, Air Peace only requested for three weekly flights to Sharjah, not even Dubai airport, but the GCAA refused the airline. It only approved one weekly frequency to the airline. The only excuse they gave was that they don’t have enough slots. Where is the justice in this? That is the capital flight out of Nigeria. Nigeria should protect its own.”

Air Peace is a fast-growing private Nigerian carrier that has been expanding its long-haul destinations. Photo: Embraer

Tit-for-tat exchanges in the aviation world over slots is hardly new, and we’ve seen [several cases](#) in the [last year alone](#). However, for Emirates, this complicates things further. As the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria is an important market for connecting travelers and VFR travel. Given the thousands of diaspora globally, the carrier has a bustling schedule out of Lagos and Abuja.

However, since March, this business has been going to competitors like Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, British Airways, and more. For now, it seems like Emirates will have to wait for nearly a year before it can return to Nigeria as usual.

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What do you think about Nigeria and Emirates' arguments? Let us know in the comments!

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Pranjal Pande

Lead Journalist - India - Pranjal is an experienced journalist with a strong focus on Indian aviation. His background in political science and economics gives him unique insight into issues surrounding international travel and governmental regulations. Pranjal is enthusiastic about new aircraft types and has his stories regularly picked up by renowned publications including Forbes. Based in New Delhi, India.

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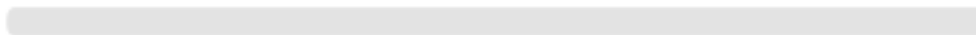
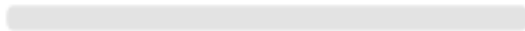
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