

Sharm El Sheikh International Airport (Arabic: مطار شرم الشيخ الدولي Maṭār Sharm El Sheikh El Dawli) (IATA: SSH, ICAO: HESH) is an international airport located in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. It is the third-busiest airport in Egypt after Cairo International Airport and Hurghada International Airport. The airport was previously known as Ophira International Airport.

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Overview[edit]

The airport was opened on 14 May 1968 as an Israeli Air Force base. After the signing of the Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty in 1979 and subsequent Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, it was reopened as a civilian airport.

The largest regular aircraft using the airport was a Transaero Airlines-operated Boeing 747-400. These flights transiting from Moscow ended when Transaero ceased operations in October 2015. British Airways operated the only regular scheduled Boeing 777-200ER service (from Gatwick Airport). However, this service (and others) has ceased due to concerns over the downing of Metrojet Flight 9268 on 31 October 2015.

In 2008, the Egyptian Airports Holding Company (EAHC) announced plans to build a third new terminal at the airport. In July 2009 the Egyptian Holding Company for Airports and Air Navigation (EHCAAN) signed a contract with Spanish construction designers Pointec for the third terminal. The terminal was planned to double the airport's capacity from 7.5 to 15 million passengers per year. The project's primary costs were estimated at \$420 million. The design phase was due to be completed by early 2010. International contractors then were invited for an open tender to construct the terminal, which was scheduled to be completely constructed by 2015.[4] By September 2016 construction had not commenced.[citation needed]

On October 31, 2015, Metrojet Flight 9268, en route from Sharm El Sheikh to St. Petersburg, Russia, crashed in the Sinai Peninsula between Nekhel and Housna, killing all 224 people on board, most of them Russian tourists. The jihadist group ISIL, at war with Russian forces in nearby Syria, quickly claimed responsibility for the crash, which was believed by western governments to be the result of a terrorist bombing. Russian investigators confirmed in mid-November that the flight was bombed; the investigation is still ongoing.[5] Following these events, many countries ordered all flights to Sharm El Sheikh suspended until further notice.[5]

In November 2015, passenger numbers significantly decreased due to the downing of Metrojet Flight 9268 on 31 October 2015. This led to airlines cancelling flights from the

airport and operating rescue flights for stranded passengers. Governments from Russia and European countries such as the United Kingdom banned airlines from operating to the airport, citing safety concerns that were highlighted following the crash. The Government of the United Kingdom, HM Government advised against all travel to and from Sharm El Sheikh.

In January 2018, it was announced that EgyptAir Express would open a base at the airport for its incoming fleet of Airbus A220s. This would increase the amount of destinations served by the airline at the airport with the possibility of operating to cities in Italy, Germany, Morocco and India non-stop.[6]

On 22 October 2019 the UK lifted the flight ban on flights between UK airports and Sharm El Sheikh.[7]

On 1 November 2019 TUI AG, parent company of TUI Airways and TUI UK announced a resumption of flights to the airport, starting in February 2020.[8]

On 9 August 2021, Rossiya Airlines operated the first flight between Russia and Sharm El Sheikh for the first time in 5 years since the banning of the flights between the resort and Russia, due to the downing of Metrojet Flight 9268.[9]

Terminals[edit]

Terminal 1[edit]

On 23 May 2007, the airport's second terminal, the new Terminal 1, was inaugurated with a capacity for 5 million passengers per year. The two-level, 43,000-square-metre (460,000 sq ft) terminal features 40 check-in counters and is designed to cater to a large number of international and chartered flights. It has two domestic and six international gates, all of which exit to remote stands. The terminal comprises three building components: two circular-shaped halls fused together by a wedge-shaped intermediate space dubbed 'the boat'. This serves as a passenger transit hub housing passport control, duty-free, and VIP areas as well as cafes/restaurants. The halls, in stark textural contrast to the solid mass of 'the boat', feature airy, billowing tent-like roofs inspired by the indigenous Bedouin culture.

Terminal 2[edit]

Although known as Terminal 2, this is actually the airport's original terminal building.[dubious – discuss] The building underwent a complete modernisation programme in 2004 and has a passenger handling capacity of 2.5 million passengers per year. Since the inauguration of Terminal 1 in 2007 most airlines have shifted operations to the new building.

In December 2016 Egyptian Airports Company announced plans to extend Terminal 2. EAC plans to expand the terminal and increase its capacity by two million passengers per year, thus taking the total capacity of the airport to 9.5 million. This also includes the construction of a new runway and 40 new airside.[10]

In November 2019, it was announced part of the expansion of Terminal 2 had been completed increasing the airports annual capacity, from 7 million, to 9 million a year. The plan aims to increase the capacity to 20 million passengers per annum as the number of tourists visiting the resort city is rising, during winter in particular. For now, the number of gates was raised to 12 from 8. The total cost of development works in the airport has reached LE 800 million so far.[11]

Terminal 3[edit]

Terminal 3 was proposed in 2008 to increase the airport's passenger handling capacity by 10 million. The airport would be expected to cater to 18 million passengers annually by 2025. The new terminal and runway were planned to be constructed adjacent to the el Salam road. Terminal three and its contact stands would occupy an area of about 183,000m² featuring a departure hall and an arrival hall, serving both international and domestic passengers. The terminal three was to face a new airfield to the north of the existing airport. Its origami shaped roof folds provide shades over the departure area, protect the facades from direct sunlight and provide natural lighting throughout the building. Taxiways and aprons were also to be constructed as part of the project. Other associated infrastructure were to include an electrical or mechanical plant, sheds for security services, a mosque, a car parking area and a wastewater treatment facility. The wastewater from the new building was to be connected to the existing sewer system and would be treated before being conveyed for the purpose of irrigation.[12]

Airlines and destinations[edit]

Airlines Destinations

Aeroflot Moscow–Sheremetyevo[13]

Air Arabia Alexandria, Amman–Queen Alia, Cairo,[14] Jeddah,[15] Yerevan[16]

Seasonal: Riyadh

Air Astana Seasonal charter: Almaty,[17] Nur-Sultan[17]

Air Bucharest Seasonal charter: Bucharest[18]

Air Cairo[19] Tashkent,[20] Yerevan

Seasonal charter: Kazan,[21] Moscow–Domodedovo,[21] Tirana,[22] Yekaterinburg[21]

Air Moldova Seasonal charter: Chişinău[23]

Air Serbia Seasonal charter: Belgrade[24]

airBaltic Seasonal charter: Riga[23]

AlMasria Universal Airlines Seasonal: Cairo, Moscow–Domodedovo[25]

Seasonal charter: Bologna,[26] Naples[27]

Animawings[28] Seasonal: Bucharest

Avia Traffic Company Bishkek[29]

Azerbaijan Airlines Seasonal: Baku[30]

Azur Air[31] Seasonal charter: Arkhangelsk, Astrakan, Barnaul, Krasnodar, Makhachkala, Moscow–Zhukovsky, Saint Petersburg, Surgut, Tomsk

Azur Air Ukraine Seasonal charter: Kharkiv,[32] Kyiv–Boryspil,[32] Lviv[32]

Bees Airline Seasonal charter: Kyiv–Zhuliany,[33][23] Lviv

Belavia Charter: Brest,[23] Gomel,[23] Grodno,[23] Minsk,[34][23] Mogilev,[23]

Vitebsk[23]

BH Air Seasonal charter: Sofia[23]

Chair Airlines Zürich

Corendon Airlines[35] Seasonal: Cologne/Bonn, Hannover[36]

DAT Seasonal charter: Copenhagen[37]

easyJet London–Luton,[38] London–Gatwick, Manchester, Milan–Malpensa[39]

Seasonal: Amsterdam (begins 2 November 2021),[40] Basel/Mulhouse (begins 3 November

2021), Berlin, Bristol (begins 3 November 2021),[41] Geneva (begins 3 November 2021),
 Naples (begins 2 November 2021),[42] Venice (begins 31 October 2021)[43]
 Edelweiss Air[44] Zürich[45]
 EgyptAir Alexandria, Cairo, Hurghada
 Seasonal: London–Gatwick, Moscow–Domodedovo[46]
 Enter Air[47] Seasonal charter: Katowice, Warsaw–Chopin
 flydubai Dubai–International[48]
 FlyEgypt Seasonal: Cairo
 Seasonal charter: Yerevan[49]
 Flynas[50] Jeddah, Riyadh
 FlyOne Seasonal charter: Chişinău[23]
 Freebird Airlines[51] Seasonal: Cologne/Bonn (begins 7 November 2021)
 Georgian Airways Seasonal: Tbilisi
 GetJet Airlines Seasonal charter: Riga,[52] Tallinn,[52] Vilnius[23]
 Gulf Air Seasonal: Bahrain[53]
 HiSky Seasonal charter: Cluj–Napoca[54]
 Holiday Europe Seasonal charter: Sofia[55]
 Jordan Aviation Seasonal: Amman–Queen Alia
 Neos[56] Bologna, Milan–Malpensa, Rome–Fiumicino, Verona
 Seasonal: Bergamo, Naples, Rimini
 Nile Air Cairo[57]
 Seasonal: Tashkent
 Nordwind Airlines[58] Seasonal charter: Arkhangelsk, Grozny, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga,
 Kazan, Kemerovo, Khabarovsk, Krasnoyarsk, Lipetsk, Magnitogorsk, Moscow–
 Sheremetyevo, Murmansk, Nizhnekamsk, Novokuznetsk, Omsk, Orenburg, Saint Petersburg,
 Samara, Saratov, Surgut, Syktyvkar, Ulyanovsk, Ufa, Yekaterinburg
 Pegasus Airlines Istanbul–Sabiha Gökçen[59]
 Qatar Airways Doha (begins 3 December 2021)[60]
 Rossiya Airlines Moscow–Sheremetyevo[9]
 S7 Airlines Moscow–Domodedovo[61]
 Seasonal: Kazan (begins 2 November 2021),[61] Samara (begins 10 November 2021),[61]
 Ufa (begins 2 November 2021),[61] Yekaterinburg (begins 1 November 2021)[61]
 Saudia[62] Jeddah, Riyadh
 SkyUp[63] Charter: Kharkiv, Kyiv–Boryspil, Lviv, Odessa, Zaporizhzhia
 Seasonal charter: Kherson, Mykolaiv
 Smartlynx Airlines Seasonal charter: Tallinn[23]
 Sunday Airlines Seasonal charter: Almaty,[23] Nur–Sultan[23]
 Swiss International Air Lines Seasonal: Geneva[64]
 TUI Airways[65] Birmingham, Bristol (resumes 6 February 2022),[66] East Midlands
 (resumes 7 February 2022),[66] London–Gatwick, London–Stansted (resumes 19 December
 2021),[66] Manchester
 TUI fly Belgium[67] Brussels, Ostend/Bruges
 Seasonal: Charleroi

TUI fly Netherlands Seasonal: Eindhoven

Turkish Airlines Istanbul

Ukraine International Airlines[68] Charter: Kyiv–Boryspil, Lviv, Odessa

Seasonal charter: Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia

Ural Airlines[69] Moscow–Zhukovsky

Windrose Airlines Charter: Dnipropetrovsk,[23] Kyiv–Boryspil[23]

Seasonal charter: Kharkiv,[23] Lviv,[70] Odessa[23]

Wizz Air Milan–Malpensa,[71] Naples,[72] Rome–Fiumicino,[73] Vienna (begins 11 January 2022)[74]

Seasonal: Cardiff, Venice (begins 1 November 2022)[75]

Accidents and incidents[edit]

On January 3, 2004, Flash Airlines Flight 604, en route to Cairo and then Paris as its final destination, crashed in the Red Sea shortly after taking off from Sharm El Sheikh, killing all 148 people on board. Causes for the accident include pilot error and instrument failure, but investigators have been unable to reach a consensus.

On August 23, 2015, Thomson Airways Flight 476, approaching Sharm El Sheikh at the end of a flight from London Stansted Airport with 189 passengers aboard, took evasive action to avoid a missile traveling toward it; the missile missed the airliner by about 1,000 feet (300 meters), and the plane landed safely. An investigation concluded that the missile was an Egyptian armed forces missile that had strayed from a military exercise.[76]

See also[edit]

List of airports in Egypt