



Security Council

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Letter dated 16 January 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I write to you in order to draw your attention to the identical letters dated 2 January 2018 (S/2018/6) and the identical letters dated 5 January 2018 (S/2018/23) from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council concerning the claims made by Qatar that United Arab Emirates aircraft had violated the airspace of Qatar. In that connection, I should like to transmit herewith a report from the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications of Bahrain, along with maps and other annexes, that refute, with documented evidence, the claims made by Qatar in the above-mentioned letters. After reviewing the records of the Bahrain civilian air traffic control centre, it is evident that those aircraft were flying over either the training zone of the United Arab Emirates or international waters (the exclusive economic zone), which is controlled by the Bahrain Area Control Centre, and not over the area over which Qatar claims to have sovereignty.

In view of the information set out in the above-mentioned report, I should like to highlight the following:

- With regard to the identical letters dated 2 January 2018, in which it is claimed that a United Arab Emirates warplane (serial No. 0403) violated the airspace of Qatar on 21 December 2017 by flying over the exclusive economic zone, the report of the competent Bahraini authorities makes clear the following:

Contrary to what Qatar claims, the aircraft was flying in airspace that is part of the Bahrain flight information region, which the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has mandated Bahrain to administer in order to foster air safety above international waters (the exclusive economic zone). Article 58 of part V of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides that “[i]n the exclusive economic zone, all States, whether coastal or landlocked, enjoy, subject to the relevant provisions of this Convention, the freedoms referred to in article 87 of navigation and overflight and of the laying of submarine cables and pipelines, and other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to these freedoms, such as those associated with the operation of ships and aircraft...”. Article 87 of the part VII of the Convention provides that “[t]he high seas are open to all States, whether coastal or landlocked. Freedom of the high seas is exercised under the conditions laid down by this Convention and by other rules of international law. It comprises, inter alia, both for coastal and land-locked States: (a) freedom of navigation; (b) freedom of overflight...”.



- With regard to the identical letters dated 5 January 2018, in which it is claimed that, on 3 January 2018, a United Arab Emirates military aircraft (call sign UAF2276, type DH-6) flew over the exclusive economic zone of Qatar, the report of the Bahrain air traffic control centre makes clear the following:

The United Arab Emirates aircraft was flying in airspace that is part of the Bahrain flight information region and over international waters. It was heading to Sheikh Isa Airbase in Bahrain at an altitude of 8,000 feet and was in direct contact with the Bahrain flight information centre. Under radar guidance, the aircraft was directed to land at Sheikh Isa Airbase. The aircraft's flight plan had been sent in advance to the air traffic control unit of Qatar via the automated flight plan management system, in accordance with the relevant operational procedures.

On 27 December 2017, two Qatar Air Force aircraft intercepted two United Arab Emirates military transport aircraft. One of the aircraft (flight UAF812) was 37 miles from the coast of Qatar and heading to Sheikh Isa Airbase, while the other (flight UAF813) was approximately 30 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar and heading to Marka airport in Amman. In addition, Qatar air defence sent messages to two United Arab Emirates military transport aircraft instructing them to change course. The flights were UAF1211, which was 12 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar and heading to Sheikh Isa Airbase, and UAF1226, which was 45 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar and also heading to Sheikh Isa Airbase.

The area over which Qatar claims to have sovereignty and alleges that United Arab Emirates aircraft violated is within the area that is monitored by the competent authorities of Bahrain. That arrangement is in place pursuant to article 3 of the agreement concerning air traffic services that Bahrain and Qatar signed in 2000. That article provides that the contracting parties agree that the Bahrain flight information centre in Bahrain shall be responsible for monitoring aircraft movement in the airspace and above the territorial waters of Qatar (as defined in article 2 of the agreement), other than those airways or lower altitudes for which Qatar is responsible under the technical arrangements arrived at by the civil aviation authorities of the two countries, in accordance with article 4 of the agreement, which shall be reviewed with the agreement of the parties whenever operational requirements necessitate that.

Moreover, the United Arab Emirates aircraft did not violate the airspace of Qatar. All the aircraft noted in the above-mentioned report were at least 12 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar, in accordance with United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, part II, section 2, article 3, which provides that “[e]very State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines determined in accordance with this Convention”.

In summary, the information contained in the report indicates that the allegations that were made by Qatar in the above-mentioned letters are unfounded. Those letters present false facts and propagate information that is incorrect and contrary to international law and instruments. They are also an unjustified escalation on the part of Qatar, which has not adhered to the principle good-neighbourly relations. The interception of United Arab Emirates aircraft by Qatari warplanes is a threat to the safety of aviation and a clear violation of international law. All the United Arab Emirates aircraft were in international airspace recognized by ICAO and in the airspace of Bahrain. What is more troublesome is that Qatar continued to attempt to communicate with the United Arab Emirates aircraft even after they had reached Sheikh Isa Airbase in Bahrain.

Qatar must therefore take care to be accurate, as engaging in such conduct and making such irresponsible claims undermines its credibility, is contrary to the

principle of good-neighbourly relations under the Charter of the United Nations, and will affect international security and peace.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hayfa Ali Ahmed **Matar**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

**Annex to the letter dated 16 January 2018 from the Chargé
d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the
United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications

Report

1. At precisely 0953 hours local time on Thursday, 21 December 2017, a warplane (serial No. 0403) was observed flying over training area OMR54, which is in the airspace of the United Arab Emirates. The aircraft left the training area and travelled approximately seven miles into the airspace of the Bahrain flight information region. It circled over international waters for one minute at an altitude of 33,000 feet before turning south-east and heading back to the training area. This aircraft was not in contact with the Bahrain flight information centre (see chart No. 5).

2. Recordings of air traffic control communications from 27 December 2017 indicate that the following occurred:

- At approximately 0850 hours local time, the captain of a United Arab Emirates C-130 military transport aircraft (flight UAF1211) that was heading from Abu Dhabi Airport to Sheikh Isa Airbase said that he had received several messages from Qatar ordering him to turn right from his airway (UP699). At the time, the aircraft was approximately 50 miles north-east of Bahrain International Airport and 12 miles from the coast of Qatar. The aircraft changed course and turned right, so as to remain far from the coast of Qatar (see chart No. 1).
- At approximately 0917 hours local time, a United Arab Emirates CN-35 military transport aircraft (flight UAF812) was heading from Abu Dhabi Airport to Sheikh Isa Air Base along airway UP699. The aircraft was above point NAGOG and approximately 37 miles from the coast of Qatar when two Qatar Air Force Mirage aircraft, along with their escort, intercepted it. When the aircraft reached point VEDED, which is 15 nautical miles away from the coast of Qatar, the captain of flight UAF812 was asked to turn right, in order to avoid the airspace of Qatar. At approximately 0938 hours, when the aircraft was 8 nautical miles from point SOGAT and 18 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar, the intercepting aircraft moved away and headed to the east (see chart No. 2).
- At approximately 0939 hours local time, a United Arab Emirates CN-35 military transport aircraft (flight UAF813) was heading from Abu Dhabi to Amman (Marka airport) along airway UL768. The Bahrain air traffic control centre changed the course of the aircraft and had it fly further from the coast of Qatar, in the hope that doing so would ensure that it would not be intercepted. However, when the aircraft was 5 nautical miles away from point MODOG and approximately 30 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar, the same two Qatari aircraft intercepted it and escorted until it was 10 miles north of point SOGAT and approximately 20 nautical miles north of the coast of Qatar. At that point, the intercepting aircraft pulled away and headed towards Qatar (see chart No. 3).
- At approximately 1034 hours local time, a United Arab Emirates C-17 military transport aircraft (flight UAF1226) heading from Abu Dhabi to Sheikh Isa Airbase was 8 miles north of point NAGOG and 45 nautical miles from the coast of Qatar when the captain received a message from Qatar air defence ordering him to move away from Qatari territorial waters. After contacting Qatar civilian air traffic control, it was determined that the distance was sufficient and the aircraft continued on its course (see chart No. 4).

3. At precisely 1038 hours local time on Wednesday, 3 January 2018, a United Arab Emirates DH-6 military transport aircraft (call sign UAF2276) was observed heading to Sheikh Isa Airbase in Bahrain. The aircraft was flying in Bahrain flight information region airspace and above international waters at an altitude of 8,000 feet and was in direct contact with the Bahrain flight information centre. In accordance with air traffic control procedures, radar guidance was used to direct the aircraft to fly between airways UM600 and UL768, and then land at Sheikh Isa Airbase. The flight plan of the above-mentioned aircraft was sent in advance to the civil aviation control unit of Qatar via the automated flight plan management system, in accordance with the relevant operational procedures (see chart No. 6).

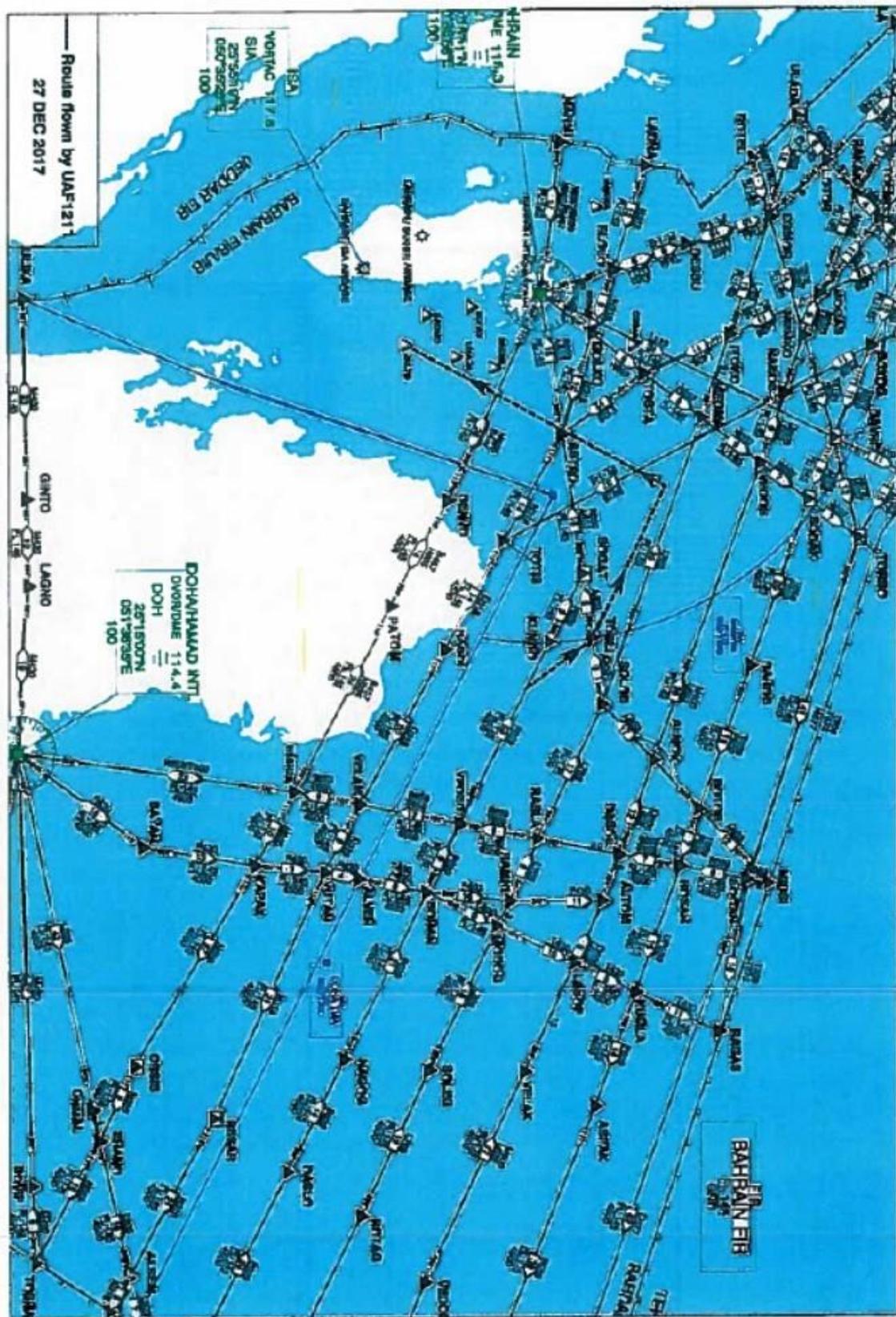
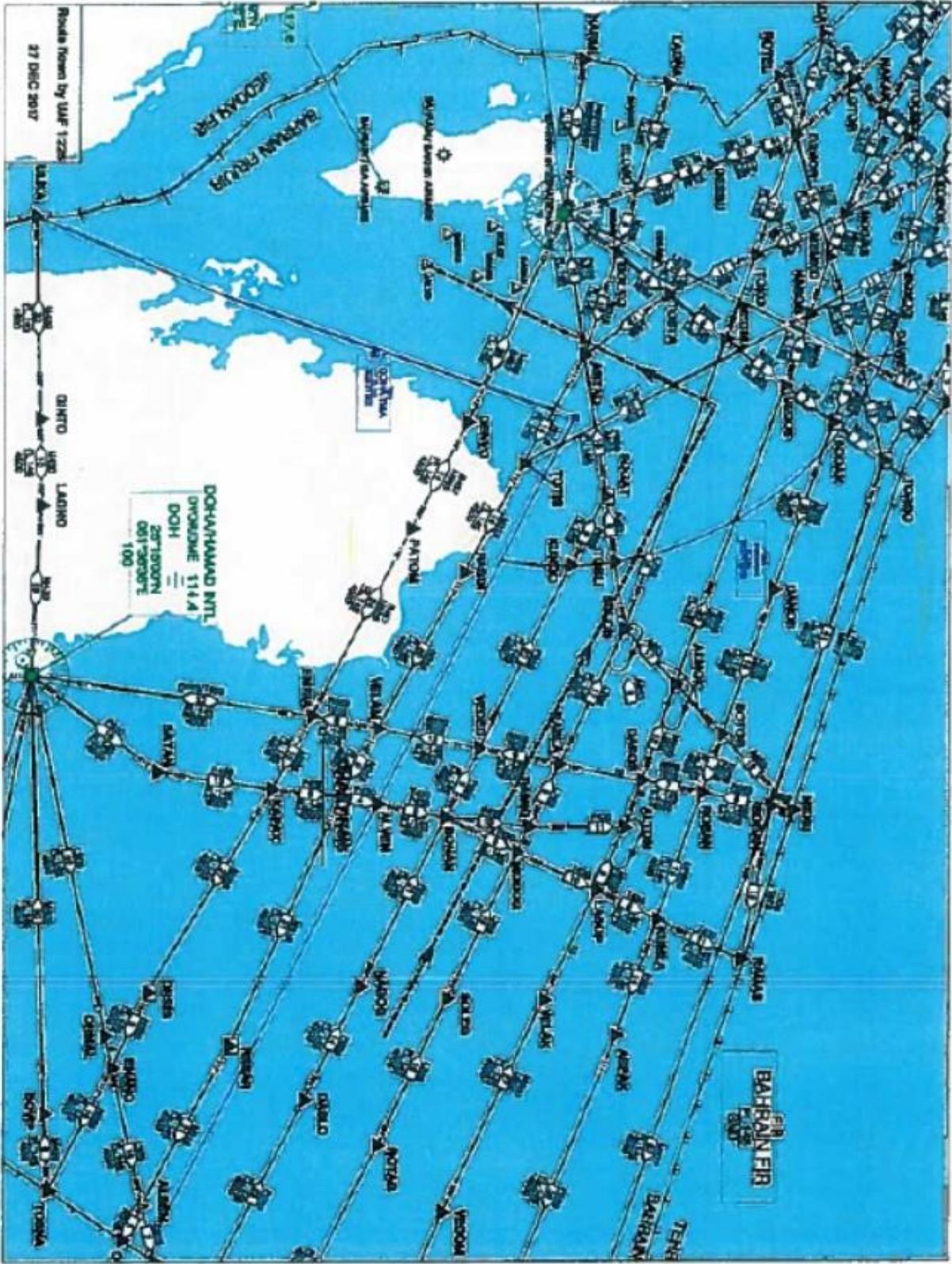
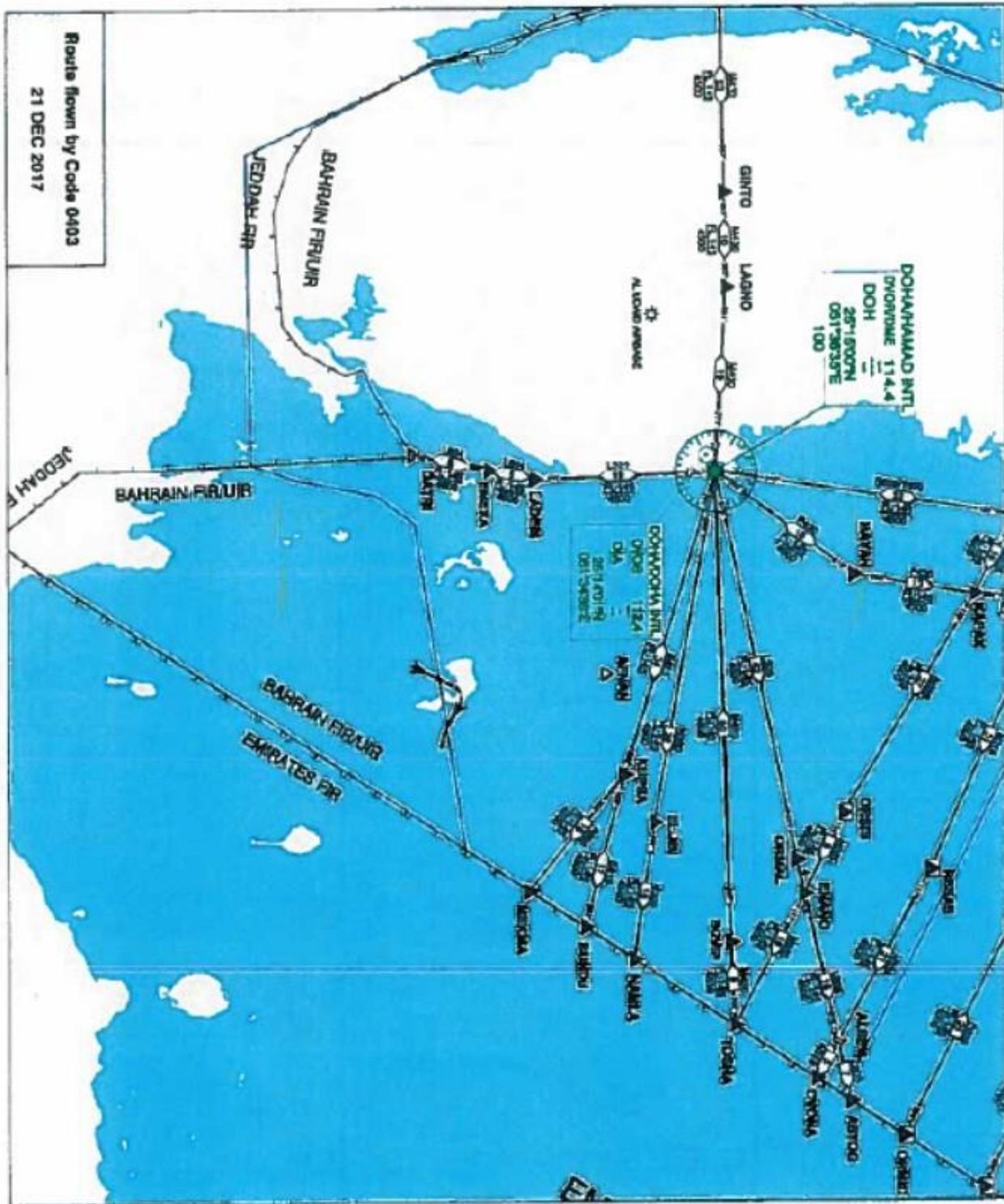


CHART NO. 1







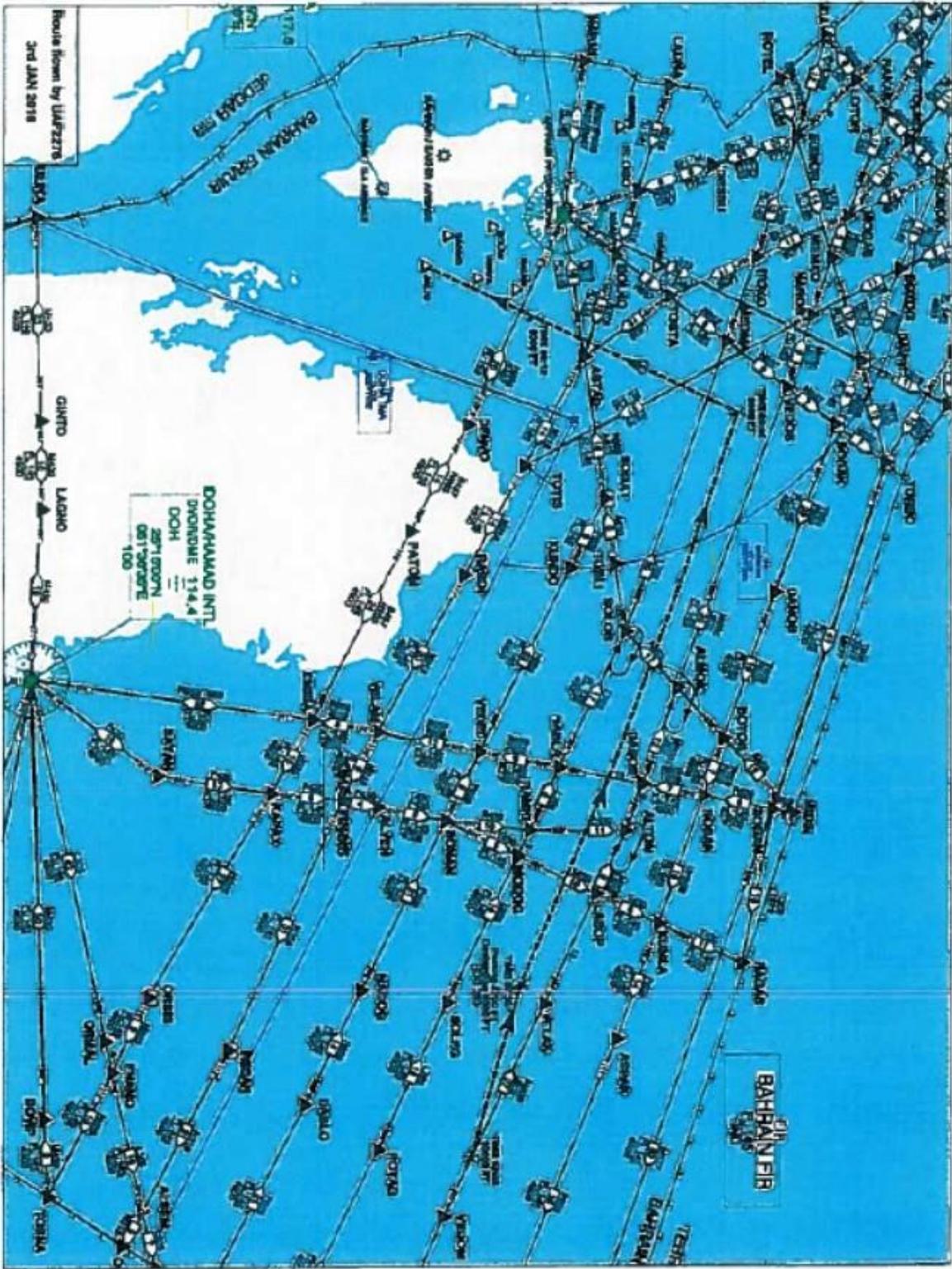


CHART NO.6

خط الطيران

(1)

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(4)

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(5)

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