



Department
for Transport

Lilian Greenwood MP
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From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling

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Dear Lilian,

28 July 2017

I am writing to update the Transport Select Committee on the Government's work to review aviation security on flights into the UK.

You will be aware that in March I announced new aviation security measures on some in-bound flights in response to potential threats to aviation. These measures meant passengers boarding flights to the UK from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia were not allowed to take any phones, laptops or tablets above a certain size into the cabin of the plane.

I can today update you that, following further work by the Department for Transport, its international partners and the aviation industry to introduce additional security measures, the Government has been able to offer to lift the restrictions on larger electronics in the cabin, subject to verification that affected airlines have put in place alternative security measures. This will mean a gradual ending of the ban in airports across the six countries, depending on how quickly airlines have the alternative measures ready.

Several carriers have already requested this verification and I am pleased to report that, following an assessment on the ground by my officials, the Department has written today to two Turkish carriers, confirming that their flights from Istanbul's two main airports are no longer subject to the electronics ban. We expect to assess other carriers, including some UK operators, next week.

Meanwhile, existing restrictions on electronic devices in the cabin of other UK-bound flights from elsewhere in Turkey, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, currently remain in place.

However, these restrictions will be lifted on a case-by-case basis once the UK government has verified that airlines have put in place additional security measures. Updates will be posted on Gov.uk as restrictions are lifted airport by airport.

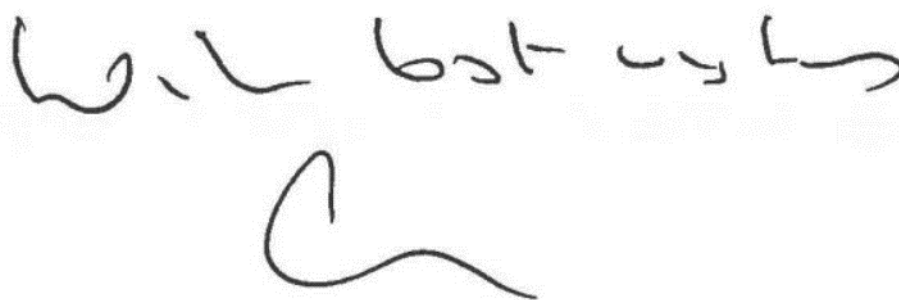
Our top priority will always be to ensure the safety and security of the travelling public. I must stress that passengers flying from countries where the restrictions have been lifted will be subject to additional rigorous screening, and the current restrictions on electronics will not be removed until we are satisfied it is safe and proportionate to do so.

This change to our aviation security regime is broadly in line with similar steps announced by the United States Government to lift its own restrictions on electronics in the cabin. However, this decision was based on our own assessments. For obvious reasons we will not be commenting in detail on the measures.

In conjunction with our international partners and the aviation industry, the Government keeps aviation security under constant review. The UK has some of the most robust aviation security measures in the world and we will not hesitate to put in place measures we believe are necessary, effective and proportionate.

I would reiterate that there is no change to the national threat level, which remains at "Severe".

I have placed copies of this letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. L. Best" followed by a stylized flourish.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT