

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Africa and Middle East Region (AFM)

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1. SUMMARY

This report highlights the activities, progress, and major developments within the IFATCA Africa and Middle East (AFM) Region since the 64th IFATCA Annual Conference held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in April 2025.

It has been a demanding, eventful, and, in many respects, inspiring period for our Region. Over the past year, we have worked hard to ensure that IFATCA remained visible, relevant, and impactful across Africa and the Middle East. Our efforts have focused on strong regional and global representation, sustained advocacy for colleagues facing detention, conflict, and other professional challenges, the expansion of capacity-building initiatives, and the strengthening of cooperation with aviation partners and sister organisations.

This period also saw the successful hosting of the 36th AFM Regional Meeting in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, as well as the consolidation of important regional initiatives such as the AFM ICON Series, the Woman-to-Woman Talk Initiative, the AFM Volunteers Initiative, and other professional development programmes.

Despite the difficult realities confronting parts of our Region, including the crises in Sudan, the Middle East, and the continued detention of one of our colleagues in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the AFM Region remained resolute in advancing IFATCA's core values of safety, professionalism, solidarity, inclusion, and constructive engagement.

2. INTRODUCTION

Since our gathering in Abu Dhabi in April 2025, the AFM Region has experienced a period of intense activity, marked by both notable progress and serious challenges.

Across the Region, we have continued to represent IFATCA at important aviation fora, deepen engagement with our Member Associations, support professional development, and advocate

firmly and consistently for colleagues facing difficult and, in some cases, deeply troubling circumstances.

This reporting period has also tested our collective resilience. Armed conflicts, political instability, industrial tensions, and the continued detention of aviation professionals in some states have required not only advocacy, but patience, diplomacy, solidarity, and at times quiet persistence behind the scenes.

Through it all, our Region has continued to move forward with unity, purpose, and commitment. That progress has only been possible because of the support of many people.

I therefore wish to express my sincere appreciation to the IFATCA Executive Board, the AFM Executive Council, and all our MAs across the Region for their cooperation, encouragement, and unwavering solidarity. Your support has been invaluable throughout this journey.

3. REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

3.1 FACAA 6th General Assembly

Dakar, Senegal – 20–22 May 2025. It was a privilege to represent IFATCA at the 6th General Assembly of the Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations of ASECNA (FACAA), graciously hosted by the Senegalese Association of Air Traffic Controllers (APCCAS).

The Assembly brought together fifteen of the sixteen FACAA MAs and provided an important platform to reaffirm the partnership between IFATCA and FACAA, especially the need to give practical effect to the Memorandum of Understanding between both organisations.

On the margins of the Assembly, we engaged with the ICAO WACAF Regional Office, where we stressed the need for closer collaboration between IFATCA and ICAO Regional Offices. We also highlighted recurring concerns relating to ATC staffing shortages, human capacity development, and the need for greater inclusion of ATCOs in operational and policy decision-making. A courtesy meeting was also held with the Director General of ANACIM Senegal.

At the same time, the Assembly drew attention to some lingering concerns, particularly the limited engagement of parts of ASECNA leadership with ATCO representative bodies and the need for stronger institutional recognition of controllers within governance and decision-making structures.

3.2 ICAO AFI Aviation Week Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe – 26–30 May 2025

The 10th ICAO AFI Aviation Week in Victoria Falls was another important platform for visibility and engagement for the AFM Region. The conference brought together delegates from more than 48 countries and covered a broad range of issues including: air navigation infrastructure development, SAATM implementation, aviation safety oversight and audit findings, PBN implementation, sustainable aviation fuels, and gender inclusion in aviation.

AFM regional leadership and representatives of MAs participated actively in the discussions. The delegation also explored possible cooperation with the United States FAA in the areas of training and capacity development.

While the meeting was rich in content and participation, it also reminded us that IFATCA must continue to assert its voice in major regional aviation platforms so that the professional perspective of controllers is fully heard and recognised.

3.3 Global AIM Conference Abuja, Nigeria 27– 29 May 2025

IFATCA was represented at the IFAIMA Global AIM Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria. This engagement offered an important opportunity to reaffirm IFATCA's standing and credibility within the wider aviation community. During the conference, IFATCA delivered a keynote address that was well received and which underscored the Federation's unique ability to bridge technical, policy, and professional issues in a balanced and meaningful way.

The event also created useful space to strengthen ties with the Aeronautical Information Management community, while reinforcing the fact that aviation safety and efficiency are best served when all operational professionals work in close partnership.

3.4 IFATSEA Africa Regional Conference Kampala, Uganda – 17–20 June 2025

The AFM Region was represented at the IFATSEA Africa Regional Meeting in Kampala. Our key message was clear: aviation modernisation must go hand in hand with human capacity development. We also reaffirmed the vital role of ATSEPs in ensuring safe and resilient CNS/ATM systems and reiterated the importance of continued collaboration between IFATCA and IFATSEA in advancing shared regional priorities.

3.5 Morocco National ATC Day Casablanca, Morocco – 25 June 2025

IFATCA was invited to participate in Morocco's National ATC Day celebration in Casablanca. The event reflected a strong sense of pride and commitment among Moroccan ATCOs and demonstrated healthy engagement between aviation professionals and national authorities. It also provided an opportunity to continue discussions relating to the future representation of Moroccan ATCOs within IFATCA.

During the reporting period, developments occurred regarding the representation of air traffic controllers in Morocco within IFATCA. The MA formally expressed its position that the Union representing Moroccan ATCOs should assume responsibility as the MA. The President of the MA indicated that its active membership has declined considerably, while the Union now represents the overwhelming majority of Moroccan air traffic controllers nationwide.

Following open and constructive discussions involving the MA, the Union, and IFATCA leadership, a common understanding was reached which will be presented at the Conference.

3.6 ICAO NGAP Global Summit Durban, South Africa 12 - 14 August 2025

At the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Global Summit, IFATCA engaged with young people, students, and aspiring aviation professionals, promoting air traffic control as a meaningful and rewarding career path.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of the summit was the opportunity to interact directly with young participants and introduce them to the ATC profession. These conversations were a strong reminder that the future of our profession depends on how well we inspire, encourage, and prepare the next generation.

3.7 CANSO Africa Conference Nairobi, Kenya – 26–28 August 2025

At the CANSO Africa Conference, held under the theme “Future Skies for Africa: Enhancing Alignment, Collaboration, and Implementation,” IFATCA contributed to important discussions on safety culture and leadership.

During the technical sessions, we emphasised the critical importance of Just Culture within ANSP safety management systems and stressed that safety reporting must take place in an environment free from blame, intimidation, or fear of punishment.

The detention of ATCOs within parts of the Region was also highlighted as not only a professional concern, but a serious safety matter.

3.8 First Meeting of the Africa–Indian Ocean Aviation System Planning and Implementation Group (AASPG/1) – Libreville, Gabon 3–7 November 2025

The AFM Region submitted working papers to the inaugural meeting of the ICAO Africa–Indian Ocean Aviation System Planning and Implementation Group (AASPG/1), addressing key regional priorities including ATC manpower shortages and the promotion of Just Culture within the AFI Region.

The papers were presented on behalf of the Region by Mr. Hussaini Jibrin (NATCA Nigeria) and contributed to ongoing discussions aimed at strengthening operational safety, workforce sustainability, and a positive safety culture across the AFI Region.

3.9 7th Global Mental Health Summit – Cape Town, South Africa 10–12 November 2025

The IFATCA Africa and Middle East (AFM) Region was represented at the 7th Global Mental Health Summit by the AFM representative on the Mental Wellbeing Taskforce.

This participation reflected IFATCA’s increasing commitment to advancing discussions on mental wellbeing, fatigue management, and human factors, critical areas of growing importance to the safety, performance, and resilience of air traffic controllers worldwide.

3.10 IFATSEA General Assembly – Cape Town, South Africa 9–14 November 2025

It was a privilege to represent IFATCA at the 53rd IFATSEA General Assembly in Cape Town, where I conveyed a goodwill message on behalf of the PCX and the Executive Board.

IFATCA’s participation was warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated by the organisers and delegates. The goodwill message resonated strongly with participants, generating considerable interest and prompting several delegates to formally request copies, an indication of both its relevance and the enduring partnership between IFATCA and IFATSEA.

3.11 ICAO MID ATM Contingency Activities – Muscat, Oman 1 - 5 February 2026

In the same spirit of regional collaboration, a member of the EGATCA Board represented IFATCA at the ICAO MID Special ATM Contingency Meeting and the MID Region ATM Contingency Framework Workshop, held in Muscat, Oman, from 1–5 February 2026. Participation ensured that the perspectives of air traffic controllers were reflected in discussions on contingency planning and operational resilience across the Middle East Region.

3.12 IFALPA Regional Engagement Cairo, Egypt 10 - 13 February 2026

IFATCA also received an invitation from IFALPA, conveyed through David Perks (IFATCA Liaison Officer to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission) and Nabil Touazi, IFATCA RVP for North and Middle East, to participate in the IFALPA Regional Meeting held from 10–13 February 2026, around the time of the IFATCA Executive Board Meeting. IFATCA was represented at the meeting by the President of EGATCA (Egypt), Mr. Mohamed Abdelmounim, reflecting the continued cooperation and strong professional partnership between the two global federations.

4. REGIONAL CHALLENGES AND ADVOCACY

4.1 Middle East Crisis

The continuing instability in the Middle East has had far-reaching implications for aviation operations, including airspace closures, traffic re-routings, and significantly increased workload for neighbouring FIRs.

Throughout this period, IFATCA participated actively in ICAO MID contingency planning meetings, consistently advocating for the recognition and protection of ATCOs as neutral safety professionals operating under abnormal and often hazardous conditions.

We also extended solidarity to the MAs and colleagues directly affected by the crisis, especially those managing extraordinary operational pressures.

4.2 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The situation concerning our colleagues in Goma and Bukavu has been one of the most difficult and sensitive issues confronting our Region. The recent release of one of the detained air traffic controllers after more than two years in custody brings a measure of relief and encouragement to the Federation.

However, the matter is not yet fully resolved, as another colleague remains in detention for over two years and three months. Despite sustained engagement by the IFATCA EB, the AFM AFM EC, and continued advocacy through formal correspondence and diplomatic channels, progress has been gradual and the response from local authorities limited. IFATCA has remained in close contact with the affected MA and continues to monitor developments carefully.

This issue extends beyond the circumstances of any individual. It touches on the dignity of our profession, the principles of fairness and due process, and the manner in which aviation professionals working in safety-critical environments should be treated.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to continued advocacy until all our colleagues are accorded justice, dignity, and the professional respect they deserve.

4.3 Sudan Crisis

The situation in Sudan has shown signs of gradual improvement; however, the overall circumstances largely remain consistent with what was reported at the last Annual Conference. The conflict has continued to affect aviation operations and the wellbeing of our colleagues. While some stabilisation has been observed in certain areas, significant operational and humanitarian challenges persist.

During this period, the suspension of operations at Khartoum ACC and the establishment of a temporary ACC in Port Sudan have remained key developments. Despite the difficult environment, Sudanese air traffic controllers have continued to demonstrate remarkable dedication, maintaining essential services under extremely challenging conditions.

Their resilience, professionalism, and commitment to duty continue to command the respect and admiration of the Federation. IFATCA remains in close contact with our Sudanese colleagues and reaffirms its solidarity and support during this challenging period. The conflict in Sudan has continued to disrupt aviation operations and deeply affect our colleagues.

4.4 Strike Action by ATCOs in São Tomé and Príncipe

Industrial action by air traffic controllers in São Tomé and Príncipe occurred between 21 and 28 November 2025, primarily relating to licensing allowances and conditions of service.

IFATCA, through the President and the AFM EVP, supported by the RVP West Africa, formally engaged the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, emphasising the safety-critical role of ATCOs, the importance of Just Culture, the primacy of dialogue over coercive measures, and the unacceptability of intimidation, arrests, or criminalisation of operational staff during labour disputes.

Following constructive engagement, the strike concluded successfully. The São Tomé and Príncipe ATCO Association formally acknowledged IFATCA's intervention, expressing appreciation for the solidarity, guidance, and leadership provided throughout the dispute.

4.5 Strike Action by ATCOs in Cabo Verde

Industrial tensions in Cabo Verde were addressed through sustained IFATCA advocacy. A formal IFATCA statement underscored that the ATCOs' demands were aligned with international best practices, labour rights, and aviation safety requirements.

Subsequent negotiations between the Cabo Verde ATCO Association (ACCTA) and the employer concluded successfully, resulting in the cancellation of the planned second strike. The Association formally conveyed its appreciation to IFATCA and the AFM EVP for availability, encouragement, and continuous support.

These outcomes reaffirm the effectiveness of social dialogue, unity, and professional engagement over enforcement-based approaches.

4.6 Somalia – Association Legitimacy Challenge

During the reporting period, the legitimacy of the Somali Air Traffic Controllers Association (SOMATCA) was challenged by the emergence of a new group identifying itself as the Association of Somali Air Traffic Controllers (ASATC).

Concerns were raised regarding the absence of inclusive democratic processes and governance structures. The AFM Executive Council reiterated IFATCA's principles on democratic representation, unity of the profession, and orderly processes. The EVP engaged both parties and urged the resolution of internal differences. Both parties were advised on the applicable provisions of the IAM, particularly paragraphs 2.1.5 to 2.1.12.

AFM continues to monitor developments closely and remains available to support constructive dialogue that promotes unity, legitimacy, and the best interests of Somali ATCOs.

5. REGIONAL INITIATIVES

5.1 AFM Volunteers Initiative

The AFM Volunteers Initiative continues to grow steadily as a platform for solidarity, service, and regional engagement. Through this initiative, we have created a volunteer network, shared inspiring volunteer stories through our communication platforms, and encouraged participation in technical work, mentorship, and regional support activities.

It is encouraging to see more members stepping forward to contribute their time, experience, and skills to the collective progress of the Region.

5.2 AFM ICON Initiative

The AFM ICON Initiative was established to honour past leaders, celebrate their contributions, and preserve the institutional memory of our Region.

The inaugural session, delivered by former EVP AFM Oliver Farirayi, was both insightful and inspiring. This was followed by a special ICON edition featuring former EVP AFM Albert Taylor, whose reflections on leadership, legacy, and service resonated strongly across the Region.

This initiative is helping us reconnect with our history while inspiring the next generation of AFM leaders. Our next edition will feature Keziah Ogutu and Fateh Bekhti.

5.3 Woman-to-Woman Talk Initiative

The Woman-to-Woman Talk Initiative, implemented under the auspices of the AFM Women Support Group and ably led by Lumbiwe Hara Hkasobe (Zambia) and Hemeda Ahmed Mohamed (Djibouti), has continued to flourish and remains one of the most meaningful and inspiring platforms within our Region.

By creating a supportive space where accomplished women in aviation can share their journeys, lessons, and perspectives, the initiative is contributing significantly to strengthening inclusion, visibility, mentorship, and confidence among women professionals across the Africa and Middle East Region.

We have been privileged to host distinguished speakers including the Director General of the Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority, the Director of Civil Aviation of South Africa, and the Deputy Director General of the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, whose contributions have enriched the discussions and inspired participants across the region.

The enthusiasm and strong participation generated by this initiative clearly demonstrate that it is meeting an important need within our regional aviation family and continues to serve as a valuable platform for empowerment and professional engagement.

5.4 AFM Virtual Presentation Series

The AFM Virtual Presentation Series has continued to serve as an important knowledge-sharing and engagement platform for ATCOs across the Region.

I am pleased to note that the series has now been successfully concluded, with the final presentation delivered by the quintessential Lady T (Tatiana), our amiable and ever-supportive Office Manager. Her session provided a fitting and memorable close to a very impactful initiative.

The series achieved its core objectives of rekindling interest, strengthening awareness, encouraging participation, and bringing members closer to the work of IFATCA. The consistently strong attendance throughout the series reflected the appetite for learning and connection across the Region.

5.5 AFM PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Governance Roles and Responsibilities Framework for the AFM Peer Support Programme (PSP) was formally adopted during the 36th IFATCA Africa and Middle East Regional Meeting held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in November 2025. The framework establishes the structure, oversight mechanisms, and operational responsibilities required to guide the implementation of the programme across the Region.

Following the adoption of the framework, a Programme Group and Manager has been appointed to coordinate the operational aspects of the initiative and to support the structured rollout of the programme across the AFM Region.

In preparation for the implementation phase, capacity-building activities are being planned, including dedicated training for members of the PSP Governing Board and the PSP Management Group. These training sessions are expected to take place shortly after the IFATCA Annual Conference, marking the next step toward the operationalisation of the programme within the Region.

6. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

6.1 AFM Executive Council

The AFM Executive Council currently comprises:

- Ahmad Abba (Nigeria) – Executive Vice President, AFM
- Nabil Touazi (Algeria) – RVP North Africa & Middle East
- Tonny Ssenkubuge (Uganda) – RVP East Africa
- Francis Armah-Mensah (Ghana) – RVP West Africa
- Allan Manema (Zimbabwe) – RVP Southern Africa
- Nadia Bamowongo (DRC) – Chair, AFM Professional and Technical Committee
- Maureen Isika (Kenya) – Chair, AFM Communications Committee

I remain deeply grateful to my colleagues on the Executive Council for their dedication, support, and teamwork throughout this demanding period.

7. REGIONAL MEETINGS

7.1 36th AFM Regional Meeting Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe – 3–7 November 2025

The 36th AFM Regional Meeting in Victoria Falls was, without doubt, a landmark event for our Region. The meeting benefited from the active participation of the IFATCA President, the EVP Europe, and several distinguished guests and stakeholders. It also featured valuable CISM

training programmes and a high-level Ministerial Panel involving aviation ministers from four countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe).

Beyond the impressive attendance and quality of discussions, the meeting significantly enhanced the AFM Region's visibility, credibility, and strategic influence. It was also a strong reminder of what our Region can achieve when unity, planning, and commitment come together.

8. CAPACITY BUILDING

8.1 IFATCA / ITF Africa Joint Training Programme

One of the major capacity-building milestones of the period has been the preparation for the IFATCA/ITF Africa Joint Training Programme on Industrial Relations and Negotiation Skills, scheduled to hold from 23–27 March 2026 at the NCAA Training Hall, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria.

This programme is designed to strengthen industrial dialogue, negotiation capacity, and professional representation within the aviation sector. It is an important investment in leadership, labour relations, and constructive engagement across our Region.

9. FUTURE REGIONAL MEETINGS

9.1 37th AFM Regional Meeting

I am pleased to report that the 37th AFM Regional Meeting will be hosted in Amman, Jordan, from 26–30 October 2026 with the last two days dedicated for Positive Safety Culture training.

We look forward to another meaningful gathering that will further strengthen our regional unity and strategic direction.

10. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

10.1 Participation in Bucharest 2026

Despite the initial challenges associated with invitation letters and visa issuance, I am pleased to note that more than 22 MsAs have registered and indicated their readiness to participate in this Annual Conference.

This is a strong reflection of the commitment, resilience, and enthusiasm of our Region. It also shows that, even in the face of logistical and financial challenges, AFM members remain determined to be present, visible, and engaged in the affairs of our Federation.

10.2 Looking Ahead to the 66th Annual Conference

It is also my great pleasure to look ahead and warmly welcome colleagues, friends, and the wider IFATCA family to Kampala, Uganda, for the 66th IFATCA Annual Conference.

We look forward to offering the Federation the warmth, vibrancy, and rich hospitality for which Africa is known. Kampala promises not only a memorable conference, but also a genuine experience of African friendship, culture, and professional solidarity.

11. CONCLUSION

The reporting period has been both demanding and productive. Across the AFM Region, we have expanded professional development initiatives, increased our visibility and engagement at global

and regional levels, strengthened internal collaboration, and maintained firm advocacy for colleagues facing difficult situations.

At the same time, the continuing crises in Sudan, the Middle East, and the DRC remain matters of deep concern. These challenges remind us that our Federation is not only a professional body, but also a family bound together by solidarity, shared responsibility, and common purpose.

I remain confident that through unity, professionalism, perseverance, and mutual support, the AFM Region will continue to serve as a strong and dependable pillar of IFATCA.

12. RECOMMENDATION

That this report be accepted as information.