

Domestic flights in Nigeria disrupted due to fuel shortage

Fuel shortages in Nigeria have caused domestic airlines to cancel some internal flights and delay others this week, two of the country's biggest carriers said on Wednesday, 9 March.

By Chijioke Oluocha 11 Mar 2022



A Boeing 737-7BD Arik Air aeroplane is seen parked on the tarmac at the local airport in Lagos, file. REUTERS/Akintunde Akinleye/File Photo

Air Peace, Nigeria's biggest carrier by passenger numbers, flying to Dubai and Johannesburg, said it was likely to experience flight disruptions on Wednesday and in the coming days due to jet fuel scarcity.

"Unfortunately, the fuel scarcity is starting to seriously impact our operations," it said.

Another carrier, Arik Air, delayed almost all its flights on Tuesday and cancelled others, it said, adding that there was no certainty on the situation in the coming days.

Nigeria imports almost all its jet fuel, which has nearly doubled to as high as 625 naira (\$1.50) per litre since December, Arik Air said.

Global jet fuel prices have hit a near 14-year peak as Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered a surge in the crude oil market, hitting airlines and passengers with steep cost increases.

The latest crisis marks a further blow to an airline sector still recovering from the effects of COVID-19 restrictions.

Airline passengers in Nigeria pay for fares in naira, which has weakened sharply due to devaluations. Fuel suppliers however are paid in dollars, a scarce currency in Africa's top economy.

Nigeria's fuel crisis has been exacerbated by imports of sub-standard petrol. This has angered motorists, who have been spending hours in lines to fill their tanks, while some public transport owners have taken advantage to hike fares.

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