

# EU plane ban reveals trouble in African skies

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) - The pilot pressed a flask-sized bottle of vodka to his lips and swallowed deeply before piloting his geriatric aircraft down a jungle runway in eastern Congo. The Antonov, flying valuable tin ore and two passengers out of the war-battered region, made the trip safely that day. But many others don't.

Citing safety concerns, the European Union banned 92 airlines Wednesday from its airspace. Most of the airlines are from Africa, where planes are six times likelier to crash than elsewhere and travelers swap tales of crises averted.

In announcing the ban on virtually all aircraft overseen by civil aviation authorities in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Equatorial Guinea, Swaziland and Congo from landing at European airports, EU Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot labeled many of the planes "flying coffins."

Wednesday's ban and earlier similar orders rankle

many Africans. They point out that most of the banned airlines — like Thom's Airways from Congo — no longer operate and never fly to Europe anyway, while Africans have little choice but to use them to hop around the world's poorest continent.

The deputy director of the civil aviation in Sierra Leone, which had 13 airlines banned, said his country had not had a safety audit by the main aviation-industry oversight group since the end of the country's brutal 1989-2002 civil war.

Still, "every state has sovereignty over its airspace," said Badara Allieu Tarrawallie.

The troubles in African nations are the same stymieing its aviation industry: poverty, conflict and poor governance. With little oversight, safety audits go undone and small problems are left unattended.

In Nigeria late last year, two planes flying domestic

routes crashed within seven weeks of each other killing 224 people, including dozens of schoolchildren heading home for Christmas holidays. The causes of those crashes have not been determined, but Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has referred to an intelligence report detailing safety problems involving Nigerian airlines, including planes experiencing landing gear trouble.

In December, Obasanjo blamed corruption for some of the troubles in his country's aviation industry and called in international experts for a safety review.

A continent-wide trend of economic liberalization may be fueling faster-than-average passenger growth as former state-owned airlines go private amid new competition — even as poor governments fail to adapt and oversee the growth.

"You've got the general problem of poverty and lack of government capacity. In

Africa, everyone is encouraged to privatize, but there is a very important role of the state, strengthening oversight and regulatory mechanisms as you open up the economy," says Princeton Lyman, a former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, currently a Council on Foreign Affairs fellow. "We've gone far in one way, but not the other."

Even many of Africa's larger airlines fly secondhand aircraft purchased from overseas.

Many other airlines, particularly in vast Congo, fly rickety old jets or propeller-driven planes, including some old military aircraft converted to passenger aircraft with the addition of plastic patio-style chairs.

Stories proliferate of outrageous misfortune — like presidents' wives commandeering entire sections of the now-defunct Air Afrique for shopping junkets in Paris, stranding paying passengers behind.

One solution might be banning castoff aircraft from former Soviet-bloc nations. Spare parts can be hard to obtain and some of the aging planes' maintenance docu-

mentation has been lost. "We've witnessed accidents in countries with conflict, like Congo, Angola and Sudan," says Elijah (See Ban, Page 15)

## LEGAL NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICE

During the 2005 legislative session, Assembly Bill 580 (AB580) was passed, establishing the Office of Minority Health. In fulfilling the requirements of AB580, the Nevada State Health Division must establish the Minority Health Advisory Committee.

The Governor shall appoint nine members to the Advisory Committee. Consideration must be given to whether the members appointed to the Advisory Committee reflect the ethnic and geographical diversity of this state.

Members of the Advisory Committee will be appointed for terms of 2 years. The Manager of the Office of Minority Health will serve as secretary to the committee.

If you are interested in being appointed to the Advisory Committee, please submit your name, affiliation, resume/CV and a brief explanation as to why you are seeking to be considered for a two year appointment on the Advisory Committee to the following address:

Nevada State Health Division  
Office of Minority Health  
Attn: Dr. Larry Garnell  
4220 S. Maryland Pkwy., Bldg. B, Ste 300  
Las Vegas, NV 89119

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## • PUBLIC NOTICE •

### Notice of Comment Period and Public Meetings on the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in Clark County, is seeking public comment on a new 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Projects to be funded during Fiscal Years 2006 through 2030 are based on the Regional Transportation Plan FY 2006-2030. The document is available at the RTC Administration Building (see address below) or on the RTC Web site [www.rtc.southernnevada.com](http://www.rtc.southernnevada.com) (click on "Documents" under Planning).

Please join the RTC at the following public hearing or public meetings to give your input on important transportation issues in Clark County including roadway improvements, transportation demand, bicycle facilities and funding. The open house forum will give the public an opportunity to ask the RTC staff questions and learn about the proposed plan.

**45-Day Public Comment Period:**  
8 a.m., Monday, April 3 through  
5 p.m., Wednesday, May 17, 2006

**Public Meeting**  
Wed., April 5, 2006 • 4 to 7pm  
West Las Vegas Library  
951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

**Public Meeting**  
Wed., April 12, 2006 • 4 to 7pm  
North Las Vegas Library  
2300 Civic Center Drive  
North Las Vegas, NV 89030

**Public Meeting**  
Thurs., April 6, 2006 • 4 to 7pm  
Spring Valley Library  
4280 S. Jones Blvd.  
Las Vegas, NV 89103

**Public Hearing**  
Tues., April 18, 2006 • 4 to 7pm  
RTC Administration Building  
Room 108  
600 S. Grand Central Parkway  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

**At Town Board Meeting**  
Tues., April 11, 2006 • 1:30pm  
Clark County Regional  
Government Center (Laughlin)  
101 Civic Way  
Laughlin, NV 89029

**At City Council Meeting**  
Tues., April 25, 2006 • 3:30pm  
Mesquite City Hall  
10 E. Mesquite Blvd.  
Mesquite, NV 89027

**Submit Comments/Questions:**  
Attn: Maria Rodriguez  
**Phone:** (702) 676-1500 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays)  
**TDD:** (702) 676-1834 • Fax: (702) 676-1518  
**Mail to:** RTC of Southern Nevada  
600 S. Grand Central Parkway • Las Vegas, NV 89106

For more information visit: [www.rtc.southernnevada.com](http://www.rtc.southernnevada.com)

To request a Spanish or sign language interpreter please call (702) 676-1500 at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting. A court reporter will be available at the public hearing to record official public comments.

Jacob Snow, General Manager  
Regional Transportation Commission  
600 S. Grand Central Pkwy., Ste. 350 • Las Vegas, NV 89106  
(702) 676-1500 • TDD (702) 676-1834 • [www.rtcnv.com](http://www.rtcnv.com)



## Your Horoscope Says... Mar. 30 - Apr. 5

### ARIES

The flock will come to you for direction. Give it gracefully. Know that your insights will help a lot if you deliver them in the right way. If you are a mother, guidance will be the best gift you can give others on your week. They give you appreciation.

Soul Affirmation: Knowing I can do it is the biggest preparation for getting it done.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 18, 20

### TAURUS

Most people don't know how often dreams and reality blend into that practical consciousness of yours. Knowledge comes from a dream you've had lately. This week is a good week to get started making that dream a reality.

Soul Affirmation: My spirit gives me limitless possibilities.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 39, 47

### GEMINI

Cooperation is key this week in your relationship with your partner. Even if you know you're right, let your partner have his or her way in the early going. Your staying power will give you influence or control in the late rounds.

Soul Affirmation: I let go and let the spirit run my life this week.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 24, 29

### CANCER

At home, projects flourish as family cooperates. They do love you and they are tired of being difficult. However, time spent by yourself leads to important insights. It's a favorable time for research and study.

Soul Affirmation: I let my luck work for me.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 16, 28

### LEO

Lover, friends, relatives are in your corner. They just have a hard time verbalizing it. Their support gives you the boost you need if you'd swallow your pride and reach out for it. Their help may not come in the form you want it, but it is in the form you need.

Soul Affirmation: I find joy in facing responsibility this week.

Lucky Numbers: 26, 34, 51

### VIRGO

It wouldn't hurt to be a little less independent. Depend on someone. Declare a truce. Decide that you are not right. Elevate a friend's opinion to your guiding principle for this week. Compromise. Be a team player and watch the reward unfold.

Soul Affirmation: I calm my emotions by forgetting about the past.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 14, 18

### LIBRA

You won't have enough time to get as far away as you want to go, but you'll have enough time to do some shopping for the trip. Your focus on what you need is keener now than closer to trip time. Get on out to the mall during the week. Enjoy!

Soul Affirmation: High energy and clear mind gives me the winning edge.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 19, 30

### SCORPIO

Don't waste time thinking about the past. Sure they were wrong, but what does it matter now. Enjoy the present. Find something good to do for the rest of the week. Avoid conflict. Nothing is so important that it needs to be resolved this week.

Soul Affirmation: I find comfort in the familiar.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 26, 36

### SAGITTARIUS

You face a big challenge that allows you to take big steps toward your career goals. It'll be on your mind for the next few weeks. Spend some time planning. Life is not always for fun and games. Games are not your biggest satisfaction anyway.

Soul Affirmation: The key to my happiness lies in my sympathy for others.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 16, 19

### CAPRICORN

Reconsider a business offer, it might be a good one. You've got time so sit down and weigh the pros and cons. Doing it alone is not best. Make a phone call. Talk to someone who knows you well. Get an objective opinion.

Soul Affirmation: I graciously anticipate joy and this gives me the ability to give.

Lucky Numbers: 48, 50, 51

### AQUARIUS

Your intuition is very high this week. You see where things are going even before they start. This will keep you from making false moves. Be careful not to let your suspicions keep you from making the moves that are definitely called for.

Soul Affirmation: My mood is controlled by the company I keep.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 14, 17

### PISCES

Beware of financial pitfalls. Your thinking on money matters is not as clear as it could be this week. Someone will try to catch you off guard. This week your luck turns for the better, so spend it with the one you love or want to love!

Soul Affirmation: A slowing of pace is just what I need this week.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 15, 23