DECISION SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION CASE

# Go, but keep it reversible

Whether to commit a European business delegation to Israel during an escalation scare

| | |
|---|---|
| **CLIENT** | VP Business Development, approximately 180-person Czech counter-UAS / drone-technology company |
| **DECISION** | Whether to commit a delegation to a conference in Israel roughly two weeks away |
| **SCOPE** | Public-source assessment using information available as of 26 January 2026 |

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION

**Send one person. Book flexible travel and accommodation. Keep the option to add people or cancel before the relevant deadlines.**

### How to read this brief

The note moves in four steps: first, the decision to take today; second, what the available operational signals do and do not show; third, the economics of preserving flexibility and the triggers for changing course; and finally, a backtest using information that became available later. The purpose is not to predict escalation. It is to improve a business decision made before the outcome is known.

## 1. Assessment

There is real operational caution, but no common direction. KLM has withdrawn from Tel Aviv; other carriers have taken narrower measures. EASA's strongest warning concerns Iranian airspace. Israeli carriers are still operating while making bookings easier to cancel.

That is enough caution to avoid exposing a full delegation to cancellation costs. It is not enough to give up an event that may still offer material commercial value. A one-person delegation keeps access while limiting money and staff time at risk.

## 2. Action today

| | |
|---|---|
| **DO NOW** | Identify the Israeli companies and people worth meeting; make contact; rank the meetings that could justify the trip on their own. |
| **SPEND ON** | Flexible airfare and accommodation for one person, with cancellation deadlines recorded in advance. |
| **POSTPONE** | The full three-person delegation and the most conference-specific preparation. Add people only if conditions improve. |

SECTION 2

# Evidence assessment

The four signals below are not interchangeable. A useful indicator changes a business decision; a dramatic indicator may only change the mood.

| INDICATOR | OBSERVED | ASSESSMENT | LIMITATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **EASA / 16 JAN** | European operators told not to use Iranian airspace; contingency planning recommended in neighbouring states. | A standardized aviation-risk signal. Regional operating risk is elevated. | It does not predict that Israeli airspace will close. |
| **KLM / 24 JAN** | Stops Tel Aviv service and avoids Israeli, Iranian and Iraqi airspace. | The clearest fresh commercial withdrawal. It goes further than the EASA restriction. | It is not evidence that KLM has privileged information or is forecasting an attack. |
| **OTHER EUROPEAN CARRIERS** | Air France's Dubai pause lasts a day; BA again shows Bahrain flights; Lufthansa's announced day-only Tel Aviv period had ended. | The market is not moving together. KLM should not be read as consensus. | Carriers still flying have different economics and risk tolerances; their presence does not prove calm. |
| **ISRAELI CARRIERS / 26 JAN** | El Al, Israir and Arkia alter cancellation terms; Arkia says its schedule remains normal. | Customer concern is high enough to change booking economics while Israeli operations continue. | More generous terms can sustain demand when passengers are nervous. They do not predict calm. |

Sources: EASA, 16 January; Reuters, 24 January; Reuters, 26 January

## What deserves weight

The Israeli cancellation policies are interesting because they cost something, but their direction is ambiguous. They may express confidence in continued operations, respond to weaker demand, or compete for nervous passengers. Without knowing the mechanism, a fixed positive or negative weight would create precision we do not have.

Political threats sit further down the list. Trump's statement that a U.S. 'armada' was heading toward Iran and Iran's warning of an all-out war matter to context. Neither changes this travel plan on its own. Visible military movements also deserve context, not an automatic rule. A B-52 on a flight tracker is not, by itself, a travel policy.

**Working judgment: operational measures matter most when they alter the client's ability to travel, the cost of preserving the option, or the time remaining to change course.**

SECTION 3

# Decision economics and triggers

The client can go big, stay out, or preserve access with one person. The middle option keeps the decision reversible.

| OPTION | EXPOSURE | ASSESSMENT |
|---|---|---|
| **Full delegation** | 3 people | Maximum coverage; maximum money and staff time exposed. |
| **Minimum presence** | 1 person | Flexible booking; focused preparation; option to expand or cancel. |
| **No Israel deployment** | France + remote | Lowest travel exposure; gives up scarce in-person access. |

Illustrative client inputs: EUR 18,000-20,000 for a full delegation once travel and staff time are counted, versus roughly EUR 7,000 for a minimal trip. These are hypothetical inputs, not observed market prices.

## The value of flexibility

| Cost of flexibility | Protected loss | Break-even threshold |
|---|---|---|
| **EUR 800** | **EUR 5,000** | **16%** |

If the client believes the chance of losing EUR 5,000 is above 16%, the extra EUR 800 has positive expected value under these assumptions. The research does not tell us that the actual risk is 16%, 10% or 25%. The calculation exposes the decision threshold; it does not estimate the event.

## Pre-commit the triggers

| TRIGGER | PRE-COMMITTED RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| **SCALE UP** | A credible de-escalation agreement begins to be implemented; several previously cautious European carrier groups restore normal Tel Aviv service; and Israeli aviation remains materially unrestricted as cancellation deadlines approach. |
| **PULL** | Israeli carriers materially cut operations or Israeli authorities restrict capacity or airspace; or an applicable government travel instruction creates a material employee-safety, insurance or duty-of-care problem. |
| **HOLD** | Another round of political threats; one or two additional foreign-airline cancellations while reliable access remains; or prediction-market and informal-indicator moves without corroborating operational evidence. |

SECTION 4

# Backtest and limitations

Everything in the chronology below became available after the 26 January recommendation.

| DATE | EVENT | RELEVANCE TO THE ORIGINAL DECISION |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1 FEB** | KLM says it will resume Tel Aviv flights on 2 and 3 February with an adjusted schedule. | The sharpest airline signal in the original evidence set partially reverses within a week. |
| **28 FEB** | U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran trigger regional closures and large-scale cancellations. | Hard disruption occurs, but outside the client's original two-week exposure window. |
| **2 MAR** | Ben Gurion prepares to reopen in an 'extremely limited format'. | The disruption is real and severe, but it cannot retroactively make the January signal useful for an already-ended decision window. |

Sources: Reuters, 1 February; Reuters, 28 February; Reuters, 2 March

### What the backtest does - and does not - show

With hindsight, it is tempting to call KLM's 24 January cancellation a warning of the 28 February war. For this client's two-week decision window, that is the wrong test. A disruption more than a month later cannot make an earlier signal useful for an exposure window that had already ended.

The exercise does not show that airline behaviour predicts airspace closure. The wider dataset contains leading signals, lagging responses and false alarms. At this stage it supports descriptive comparisons and lead-time analysis, not predictive probabilities or fixed indicator weights.

> **A signal is useful only relative to a decision and a time horizon.**

### What the exercise adds

Reuters can report the underlying facts faster than this note. The value comes after collection: each development is tested against a specific decision and a specific window; financial assumptions are stated; and update triggers are fixed before the next event.

**On 26 January, the evidence justified buying time. It did not justify abandoning the trip.**

Method note: Public and lawfully available sources only. This demonstration case shows an analytical approach and is not current travel, security, legal or investment advice.