



ISSUE BRIEF

June, 2026

Legislative Oversight on Jet A1 Aviation Fuel Scarcity and Implications for Flight Safety, Airline Sustainability, and National Economy

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Executive Summary

Nigeria's aviation sector is currently facing a prolonged shortage of Jet A1 aviation fuel, resulting in significant operational disruptions across the industry. According to the National Association of Aircraft Pilots and Engineers, the scarcity has triggered persistent flight delays, route adjustments, and increased operational uncertainty for airlines nationwide. The situation has also reportedly extended crew duty hours, with pilots and engineers operating under increasingly irregular schedules that heighten fatigue-related safety risks.

The shortage presents broader concerns for aviation safety, airline sustainability, passenger welfare, and national economic productivity. Prolonged disruptions in fuel supply have reportedly compelled some airlines to scale down routes and absorb rising operational costs, raising fears of potential workforce instability, service reductions, and wider economic consequences for tourism, trade, and connectivity.

Beyond immediate operational disruptions, the crisis exposes possible structural weaknesses within Nigeria's aviation fuel supply chain, including concerns relating to fuel distribution, pricing, storage capacity, supply coordination, and regulatory oversight within the downstream aviation fuel market. The situation also raises concerns regarding compliance with international aviation safety standards, particularly in relation to crew fatigue management and operational resilience.

Given the strategic importance of the aviation sector to national development, public safety, and international mobility, proactive legislative oversight by the National Assembly is necessary to ensure that aviation safety standards are not compromised and that the aviation fuel supply system remains stable, transparent, and efficient.

Accordingly, the National Assembly, through its Committees on Aviation, Petroleum Resources (Downstream), and Legislative Compliance, may consider:

- Inviting the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), airline operators, Jet A1 suppliers, and NAAPE to provide comprehensive briefings on the causes of the scarcity and current mitigation efforts



- Examining aviation fuel supply chain governance by appraising regulatory frameworks governing Jet A1 importation, distribution, pricing, and storage to identify structural inefficiencies and potential market distortions.
- Calling on the Executive to develop a coordinated fuel security mechanism for aviation, including strategic reserves, transparent pricing mechanisms, and emergency supply protocols.
- Urging NCAA to assess compliance with crew duty time limitations and enforce strict safety thresholds to prevent fatigue-related risks.
- Requiring periodic public reporting on aviation fuel availability, pricing trends, and mitigation efforts to restore public confidence and ensure stakeholder accountability.
- Investigating the impact of fuel scarcity on airline operations, employment levels, and national economic productivity within the aviation sector.

Background:

The aviation sector in Nigeria is currently experiencing a prolonged shortage of Jet A1 aviation fuel, a critical input for flight operations. According to the National Association of Aircraft Pilots and Engineers (NAAPE), the scarcity has resulted in persistent flight delays, route adjustments, and operational disruptions across multiple airlines¹.

The crisis has also led to extended crew duty hours, with pilots and engineers increasingly operating beyond planned safety limits due to irregular flight schedules. NAAPE has warned that such conditions contribute directly to elevated fatigue levels among aviation personnel, a globally recognised safety risk factor in flight operations².

Reports indicate that some airlines have already begun scaling down routes due to rising operational costs and fuel unavailability, with growing fears of potential job losses and service disruptions if the situation persists.

Issue:

The ongoing Jet A1 fuel scarcity poses a multidimensional risk to Nigeria's aviation sector, including:

- Increased flight safety risks due to crew fatigue arising from extended duty hours and unpredictable schedules
- Disruption of airline operations through delays, route reductions, and possible service suspensions

¹ Yayaha, F. (2026, May 10). Passengers at risk as Jet A1 scarcity lingers – NAAPE. Nation. <https://thenationonline.ng.net/passengers-at-risk-as-jet-a1-scarcity-lingers-naape/>

² ibid



- Financial strain on airlines, leading to reduced staff welfare, delayed salaries, and potential workforce instability.
- Threats to national connectivity, tourism, trade, and broader economic productivity.
- Weak supply chain coordination and possible regulatory inefficiencies in the downstream aviation fuel market.

These challenges collectively threaten both operational safety and the sustainability of Nigeria's aviation industry.

Rationale for Legislative Actions:

The aviation sector is a critical national infrastructure component with direct implications for public safety, economic stability, and international mobility. Legislative intervention is necessary to ensure aviation safety standards are not compromised due to fuel supply instability. It is also necessary to strengthen regulatory coordination between aviation and petroleum downstream regulators. Furthermore, it is vital to promote accountability in aviation fuel supply chains to prevent artificial scarcity or market inefficiencies, safeguard workers' welfare and prevent systemic fatigue-related safety risks in aviation operations, and protect Nigeria's aviation sector from cascading economic losses and reputational damage.

Without urgent oversight, the crisis may escalate into broader operational failures affecting airlines, passengers, and national economic interests.

Recommendations to the National Assembly:

Through its relevant Committees on Aviation, Petroleum Resources (Downstream), and Legislative Compliance, the National Assembly is respectfully urged to:

1. Summon the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), NAAPE, airline operators, and Jet A1 suppliers to provide a comprehensive briefing on the causes of the fuel scarcity and current mitigation measures.
2. Examine aviation fuel supply chain governance by appraising regulatory frameworks governing Jet A1 importation, distribution, pricing, and storage to identify structural inefficiencies and potential market distortions.
3. Call on the Executive to develop a coordinated fuel security mechanism for aviation, including strategic reserves, transparent pricing mechanisms, and emergency supply protocols.
4. Urge NCAA to assess compliance with crew duty time limitations and enforce strict safety thresholds to prevent fatigue-related risks.
5. Require periodic public reporting on aviation fuel availability, pricing trends, and mitigation efforts to restore public confidence and ensure stakeholder accountability.
6. Investigate the impact of fuel scarcity on airline operations, employment levels, and national economic productivity within the aviation sector.



Conclusion:

The ongoing Jet A1 fuel scarcity represents a critical threat to aviation safety, operational efficiency, and economic stability in Nigeria. The warnings issued by NAAPE highlight not only immediate safety concerns but also broader systemic vulnerabilities within the aviation fuel supply chain.

Proactive legislative oversight is essential to prevent a deterioration of safety standards, safeguard passenger lives, protect aviation workers, and ensure the sustainability of Nigeria's aviation industry. Early intervention by the National Assembly will reinforce regulatory accountability and help restore stability to this strategic sector.

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