

Qatar Airways is temporarily sending some of its Airbus A330 pilots to RwandAir after retiring its remaining A330 passenger aircraft, as the war involving Iran disrupts air travel in the Middle East.

The pilots, who are qualified to fly the A330, have been offered short-term assignments with RwandAir, according to Reuters, which cited two people familiar with the matter and aviation data.

The pilots are among just over a dozen Qatar Airways staff being offered temporary work with RwandAir. The arrangement allows them to continue flying while Qatar Airways has fewer opportunities to use its A330-trained crews.

A Qatar Airways spokesperson said the arrangement was voluntary and would give staff the opportunity to continue working while supporting both airlines.

“A group of Qatar Airways A330 pilots are being offered a voluntary short-term secondment opportunity with RwandAir,” the spokesperson said.

Qatar Airways has not said how long the pilots will stay with RwandAir.

The move comes as the two airlines maintain close business ties. Qatar Airways has an investment in RwandAir and the carriers have worked together through a codeshare partnership and other areas of aviation.

RwandAir operates Airbus A330 aircraft, while one of the four A330s Qatar Airways had leased from Oman Air was acquired by RwandAir earlier this year.

Qatar Airways had planned to use the four leased aircraft through 2026, but they never entered commercial passenger service before the airline decided to retire them.

The decision comes as airlines face higher operating costs linked to the conflict involving Iran. Reuters reported that jet fuel prices have roughly doubled since the war began.

Older A330 aircraft use more fuel than newer models, making them more expensive to operate when fuel prices are high. Analysts cited by Reuters said airlines can save money by keeping older aircraft parked rather than flying them under such conditions.

Cirium Ascend data showed flights using the A330-200 and A330-300 were about 12% lower in September than a year earlier.

Qatar Airways has also reduced its operations. Its passenger capacity in September was about 10% lower than a year earlier, while the number of aircraft it was operating had fallen by 4%, according to Cirium data cited by Reuters.

The airline plans to retire six aircraft between September 2026 and December 2027 while taking delivery of 19 new aircraft during the same period. It also has 410 aircraft on order from Airbus and Boeing.