

Portugal airline chief fears increasing drone near-misses

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Portugal's national airline chief said Monday he is considering asking authorities to order that all drones in the country be grounded, following a series of near-misses with commercial aircraft.

If drones "keep entering airspace, we're going to call for them to be grounded," TAP Air Portugal President Fernando Pinto said.

Such an appeal could set off a worldwide movement against the devices, he told Portuguese radio TSF.

Around the world, the number of near-misses with [aircraft](#) has increased dramatically in recent years as the popularity of drones has grown.

A TAP plane with 74 passengers almost collided with a [drone](#) as it approached Lisbon [airport](#) Sunday evening, air traffic control company NAV said. The drone came to within 50 meters (165 feet) of the right wing when the aircraft was at an altitude of 900 meters (2,900 feet), according to Portuguese media.

Unlike most other principal European airports, Lisbon airport is inside the city. Planes fly low over downtown Lisbon rooftops when landing, and a loss of control could spin an aircraft into a densely-populated area

The Portuguese Air Accident Office said it was the 10th incident this year, and local reported that it was the sixth this month.

Pinto, the head of TAP, told public broadcaster RTP he was a fan of drones, but added: "Due to the irresponsible behavior of some—and I'm speaking in a European and global context—(drones) are being used very badly, in a very dangerous way, and that worries us."

By law, drones can be flown up to 120 meters (400 feet) high and must stay clear of airports.

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