

Get AP Mobile for your phone at GetAPMobile.com

AP



Air France: Out of gas? Ask passengers to pitch in

Story user rating:



Published: Today

PARIS (AP) - An emergency layover in Syria's capital was bad enough. Then passengers on Air France Flight 562 were asked to open their wallets to check if they had enough cash to pay for more fuel.

The plane, heading from Paris to Lebanon's capital, diverted amid tensions near the Beirut airport on Wednesday. Low on fuel, it instead landed in Damascus, the capital of neighboring Syria, where a civil war is raging.

An Air France spokesman explained Friday that the crew inquired about passenger cash only as a "precautionary measure" because of the "very unusual circumstances." Sanctions against Syria complicated payment for extra fuel.

He said Air France found a way to pay for the fill-up without tapping customer pockets - and apologized for the inconvenience. The airline had never resorted to such a request before, he said.

The plane took off for an overnight layover in Cyprus then landed safely in Beirut on Thursday.

Lebanon is a volatile mix of pro- and anti-Syrian factions, and a series of hostage-takings has raised worries about Lebanon being dragged deeper into Syria's unrest. Mobs supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad blocked the main airport highway in Beirut on Wednesday, before Lebanese military units moved in.

© 2012 The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.