RYANAIR'S EXTENDED PILOT BREAKS COMPROMISED SAFETY AND LEFT PASSENGERS UNABLE TO ACCESS TOILETS — AUTHOR AND MEDITATION TEACHER SPEAKS OUT

Thursday 29 October, 2026

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Guru Rajesh Ananda questions Ryanair's passenger welfare, cockpit security procedures and crew training after personally experiencing prolonged restrictions on a flight from Paphos, Cyprus. Flight: FR 3132, 27 Oct

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

I am Guru Rajesh Ananda, an author, spiritual philosopher and meditation teacher. I am also a seasoned traveller who believes every airline passenger deserves to be treated with dignity, consideration, and respect.

I am speaking publicly about a recent Ryanair flight from Paphos, Cyprus to London Stansted because I believe it raises important questions about passenger welfare, operational procedures, and cockpit security.

During the flight, I personally witnessed both pilots leave the cockpit separately, each for about 40 minutes, one immediately after the other. (One Cypriot Pilot and one English pilot) When I questioned the chief stewardess, she sternly told me this was normal practice and that she had been flying for 10 years. I have never seen this on any flight in my 50+ years of flying, including on Ryanair, and I consider it a security risk for a pilot to be out of the cockpit for extended periods.

Throughout these periods, passengers were instructed to remain seated and were unable to access the toilets or move freely around the cabin.

For someone like me, who has a prostate condition requiring more frequent visits to the toilet, this was extremely uncomfortable.

But my concern extends far beyond my personal circumstances.

There were many other passengers on that aircraft, including older travellers and potentially others with medical conditions, whose needs may have been similarly affected.

Why should passengers be expected to endure prolonged discomfort simply because pilots are taking their breaks?

WHEN THE PILOTS FINISHED THEIR BREAKS, THE PROBLEM BECAME WORSE

What happened next demonstrated how poorly the situation appeared to have been anticipated.

Once both pilots had returned to the cockpit and passengers were finally permitted to move around, there was an immediate rush towards the toilets.

This was entirely predictable.

After such a prolonged restriction, people naturally needed to use the facilities.

However, rather than managing the situation with understanding and consideration, a member of the cabin crew announced that too many passengers were standing and activated the seatbelt sign.

We were then required to remain seated for approximately another 20 minutes.

I found this particularly frustrating.

The airline had created a situation in which passengers could not access the toilets for extended periods, yet when they understandably attempted to do so, further restrictions were imposed.

Surely passenger welfare should be central to planning and implementing any operational procedure?

MY CONCERNS ABOUT COCKPIT SECURITY

Another aspect of this experience concerns me.

I personally observed each pilot spending approximately 40 minutes outside the cockpit.

I understand that aviation regulations allow pilots to take controlled rest under specific circumstances, but such rest normally takes place inside the cockpit.

I therefore question why these extended absences were necessary and why they occurred outside the cockpit, and what safeguards were in place while only one pilot remained on the flight deck.

Could have Ryanair necessarily breached aviation regulations. However, I believe passengers are entitled to understand how these arrangements are managed and whether they represent best practice in aviation safety.

The cockpit is one of the most secure areas of any commercial aircraft, and for good reason.

If the remaining pilot were to become incapacitated, what procedures would ensure that the other pilot could respond immediately?

These are legitimate questions that deserve clear answers.

OTHER PASSENGERS HAVE REPORTED SIMILAR EXPERIENCES

I have also learned of passengers travelling on another Ryanair service between Newcastle and Cyprus who reportedly experienced similar difficulties.

Although I cannot independently verify every detail of their experiences, these accounts concern me because they suggest that what happened on my flight may not have been an isolated incident.

If this is becoming a regular occurrence, Ryanair should examine whether its procedures are being implemented with sufficient consideration for passenger welfare.

I also question whether cabin crews receive adequate training to manage these situations.

It is not enough simply to enforce procedures.

Staff must understand how those procedures affect the people they are responsible for looking after.

PASSENGER CARE SHOULD NEVER BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Throughout my life, my work has centred on understanding human wellbeing, compassion and the importance of treating others with dignity.

These principles should not disappear when we board an aircraft.

I fully appreciate that aviation security is essential and that airlines must follow strict operational procedures.

However, security and compassion are not mutually exclusive.

An airline should be capable of protecting its cockpit while also ensuring that passengers, particularly those with medical conditions, are not subjected to unnecessary physical discomfort.

For older passengers and people with prostate, bladder or other medical conditions, access to a toilet is not a luxury.

It can be an urgent physical necessity.

I believe airlines have a responsibility to anticipate these needs and ensure that their procedures make reasonable provision for them.

We should not have to choose between aviation security and basic human dignity. Both are essential.

UNLESS WE COMPLAIN, NOTHING CHANGES

I have decided to speak publicly because I believe that remaining silent about experiences like this allows poor practices to continue unchallenged.

I am not seeking special treatment.

I am asking for reasonable consideration, professionalism and respect for the basic needs of passengers.

When an airline introduces or implements procedures that restrict passengers' movement for extended periods, it should consider the consequences for those travelling on board.

I also believe that passengers should feel empowered to raise legitimate concerns without being dismissed as difficult or unreasonable.

Unless we complain, nothing changes.

That is why I am raising these issues publicly.

Not just for myself, but for the many people who may find themselves in similar circumstances and feel uncomfortable speaking out.

I AM CALLING ON RYANAIR TO EXPLAIN ITS PROCEDURES

I would welcome a response from Ryanair addressing several important questions.

Why were both pilots permitted to leave the cockpit for approximately 40 minutes each?

Was it necessary to prevent passengers from accessing the toilets during these periods, given that the seat belt signs were on the entire time?

What arrangements exist for passengers with medical conditions who may urgently need toilet facilities?

Why was the seat belt sign activated for a further 20 minutes after passengers had already experienced extended restrictions?

And what measures are in place to ensure that cabin crews respond appropriately and compassionately to passengers' needs?

I would also welcome clarification about whether similar complaints have been received on other Ryanair flights and whether the airline intends to review its procedures.

A FINAL THOUGHT

Flying should be a safe, comfortable and dignified experience for everyone.

Passengers understand that aviation involves necessary restrictions and that safety must always come first.

But safety procedures should not be implemented without consideration for the human beings affected by them.

I hope that by raising these concerns, Ryanair will review its practices and ensure passenger welfare gets the attention it deserves.

Because passengers are not simply seat numbers or ticket holders. We are human beings with real needs, and those needs deserve to be respected.

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