



This is an annual report produced in conjunction with the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Antananarivo, Madagascar, which has representation for Comoros.

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses Comoros at Level 1, indicating travelers should exercise normal precautions.

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

The U.S. Embassy in Antananarivo does not assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of the persons or firms appearing in this report. The American Citizens' Services unit (ACS) cannot recommend a particular individual or location, and assumes no responsibility for the quality of service provided.

Review OSAC's [Comoros-specific page](#) for original OSAC reporting, consular messages, and contact information, some of which may be available only to private-sector representatives with an OSAC password.

Crime Threats

There is minimal risk from crime in Moroni. On the islands of Grand Comore, Moheli, and Anjouan, criminal activity is relatively low. Criminal acts against foreigners are rare. The most commonly reported crimes are petty crimes of opportunity such as pickpocketing. Be vigilant, particularly when visiting crowded markets, parks, and beaches. Avoid walking alone, especially after dark, and displaying cash and valuable personal property.

Sexual harassment is illegal and punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment. Such harassment is a common problem, and the government does not effectively enforce penalties against it. Rape is illegal and punishable by imprisonment for five to 10 years or up to 15 years if the victim is younger than 15 years of age. The government enforces the laws on rape with some effectiveness if survivors pursue charges.

Transportation-Safety Situation

For more information, review OSAC's report, [Security in Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#) for additional information.

Road Safety and Road Conditions

On Grande Comore, the main road is of reasonable standards, but other roads are in poor condition. Most urban roads accessible by car are paved, while rural roads are generally unpaved and poorly maintained, requiring the use of a four-wheel drive vehicle. Roads on the three islands are narrow, dimly lighted, full of potholes, and have dangerous blind curves. Exercise extreme caution after dark. Roadside assistance is not available. Avoid nighttime travel outside urban areas due to poor road conditions, lack of emergency response resources, and criminal elements that target nighttime travelers.

Foreigners may drive with an International Driving Permit for up to three months. Do not exceed 30 miles per hour while driving. For more information on self-driving, review OSAC's reports, [Driving Overseas: Best Practices](#) and [Road Safety in Africa](#).

Public Transportation Conditions

Taxis and car rentals are recommended over public transportation, which is crowded, unreliable, and sometimes unsafe.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

The European Commission has [banned](#) all Air Service Comoros flights, except one aircraft due to safety concerns. As there is no direct commercial air service to the United States by carriers registered in Comoros, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed the government of Comoros's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards.

Other Travel Conditions

Travel between the islands by boat is common but is poorly regulated. When traveling by boat, avoid travelling on vessels that are overcrowded, in poor condition, or without necessary safety equipment such as lifeboats or lifejackets. Overloaded ferries have capsized in Comorian waters, sometimes resulting in significant loss of life. Use only commercially licensed ferry services equipped with adequate safety devices and ship-to-shore communications.

Mariners planning travel to Comoros should check for U.S. maritime advisories and alerts at the [Maritime Security Communications with Industry Web Portal](#). Information may also be posted to the [U.S. Coast Guard homeport website](#) and as a broadcast warning on the [National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's website](#).

The threat of piracy and armed robbery in the Indian Oceans remains a significant threat to those who travel by boat; small craft on the open seas are especially vulnerable to attack. See the Maritime Administration's ([MARAD](#)) [website](#) for advisories.

Terrorism Threat

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

There is minimal risk of terrorism in Moroni. There is a potential for youth radicalization due to limited educational and economic opportunities within the country and surrounding areas.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Civil Unrest

There is moderate risk from political violence in Moroni. Comoros has experienced occasional strikes and civil unrest, resulting in violent clashes between demonstrators and police, who have responded to demonstrations with force. General elections in early 2019 resulted in the reelection of incumbent President Azali Assoumani. Political unrest followed the contested elections, with

violent clashes at protests involving gunfire, roadblocks, and infrastructure disruptions. Tensions have since eased.

Avoid demonstrations, large gatherings, and any political rallies, as even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence. Follow the instructions of local authorities, monitor local news broadcasts, and heed U.S. consular messaging.

Religious/Ethnic Violence

Reports of religious-based violence are rare. Proselytizing and the public practice of non-Sunni Muslim religious ceremonies are against the law.

Environmental Hazards

Be mindful of jellyfish, coral, and sea urchins when swimming, snorkeling, or scuba diving. Currents can be strong in the Mozambique Channel, and riptides exist on some beaches.

Natural disasters regularly affect Comoros, including floods and tropical cyclones, which typically occur between November and May. The islands are located in an active seismic and volcanic zone, with the potential for Mount Karthala to erupt at any time. During the hot and humid rainy season, which runs from December to April, even small storms can develop quickly into major monsoons. These severe storms can put you at risk and hamper the provision of essential services.

If you decide to travel to the Comoros during the rainy season, be prepared to change travel plans on short notice, including cutting short or cancelling travel, and stay informed of the latest regional weather forecasts.

Critical Infrastructure

Tourist infrastructure is limited and telecommunication systems are not very reliable. The supply of electricity is frequently disrupted, sometimes for extended periods. Water supplies can fluctuate (including potable water), affecting tourist and other public services.

Personal Identity Concerns

Same-sex sexual relations are criminalized and are punishable by up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to U.S. \$2300.

Persons with disabilities face limited access to transportation, communication, accommodations, and public buildings. There are few sidewalks and no curb-cuts, and most buildings lack functioning elevators.

Drug-related Crimes

Convictions for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs result in a mandatory minimum five-year prison sentence and heavy fines.

Police Response

Due to the lack of resources and equipment, police/gendarmerie response to victims of a crime is often limited, slow, or nonexistent. This is primarily due to the lack of staffing, training, and funding. The likelihood of the security forces responding to an incident depends on availability of personnel. Crowd control typically involves excessive force; during instances of riots and civil unrest, police often respond by firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

It is illegal to take pictures of government buildings, military installations, and other key infrastructure such as ports, train stations, and airports. Police may issue fines, confiscate photographic equipment, and detention/arrest those violating the law. Do not take photos of Comorians without permission. For more information, review OSAC's report, [Picture This: Dos and Don'ts for Photography](#).

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Arrested or detained U.S. citizens should ask police or prison officials to notify U.S. Embassy Antananarivo's Consular Section immediately at 020-23-480-00 or 033-443-2000, or the duty officer at +261 34 49 328 54. The U.S. Embassy in Madagascar provides consular assistance, since there is no full-time official U.S. presence in Comoros.

Crime Victim Assistance

U.S. citizen victims of sexual assault should first contact the U.S. Embassy in Antananarivo. For further information local first responders, refer to the Embassy/Consulate's [Emergency Assistance page](#).

Police/Security Agencies

In Comoros six separate security forces report to five different authorities. Union government forces in Comoros are the Army of National Development, Gendarmerie, and National Directorate of Territorial Safety, all of which report to the President's cabinet director for defense. Each of the three islands has a local police force under the authority of its own minister of interior. In cities, National Gendarmerie Police maintain peace and security. Outside of major cities, the Comorian Armed Forces are primarily responsible for these duties. Although police/gendarme responses to an incident involving a foreigner are normally taken seriously and dealt with quickly, there are reports indicating a failure of law enforcement to respond when called.

Medical Emergencies

Medical care is limited on all three islands, including on Grande Comore. There are private facilities requiring advance membership. Carry prescription medication in original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription. Consider local medical care for short-term emergency stabilization only, as care does not meet Western standards. If any serious health problems are encountered, medical evacuation (medevac) to the nearest modern facility in Mayotte would be necessary.

Contact Information for Available Medical Services

Centre Hospitalier National (CHN)-El-Maarouf: B.P. 17 Moroni, Tel: +269-773-26-04.
Centre Hospitalier Regionale, Fomboni, Moheli, Tel: +269- 336-45-12; +269-333-58-37
District Wanani Hospital, Wanani, Moheli, Tel: +269-335-24-45

These are a few of the [local medical resources](#) that are available. For further medical assistance, please refer to the Embassy's [Medical assistance page](#)

Insurance Guidance

Travelers are personally responsible for all medical costs in Comoros. Providers expect payment in full in the local currency or USD before performing treatment. Medicaid/Medicare does not apply outside the United States. Private medical insurance may also impose limits or not apply overseas. If your health insurance plan does not provide coverage overseas, we consider supplemental medical insurance and medevac plans. For more information, refer to OSAC's report, [Medical Evacuation: A Primer](#).

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Prevalent diseases in Comoros include malaria, dengue fever, chikungunya, diarrheal illness, and rabies. Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before traveling. The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for [Comoros](#).

OSAC Country Council Information

There is no OSAC Country Council in Comoros. The nearest active Country Council is in Madagascar. Interested private-sector security managers should contact OSAC's [Africa team](#) with any questions.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

The U.S. Embassy Antananarivo is located at Lot 207 A, Point Liberty, Andranoro-Antehiroka, Antananarivo (105) Madagascar. The mailing address is B.P. 5253, Antananarivo (105) Madagascar. Public hours: Monday-Thursday, 0800-1600; Friday, 0800-1300

Embassy Antananarivo Contact Numbers:

Telephone: +(261) (20) 23-480-00
Emergency After-Hours Telephone: (261) (20) 23-480-00
Fax: +(261) (20) 22-584-06
Email: AntanACS@state.gov or AntanVISA@state.gov
Operator: 020-23-480-00 or 033-443-2000
Marine Post One: 020-23-480-00 or 033-443-2407
Website: <https://mg.usembassy.gov/>

[U.S. Virtual Presence Post – Comoros](#)

Embassy Guidance

All U.S. citizens in Comoros should register with the Consular Section's American Citizen Services [STEP program](#). The U.S. Embassy maintains liaison with local law enforcement officials and is available to assist American citizens during their stay in the Comoros and the French protectorate of Mayotte.

[Comoros](#) Country Information Sheet