



OSAC Country Security Report Cabo Verde

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This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State Cabo Verde Travel Advisory and [Cabo Verde Country Information Page](#).

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

U.S. Embassy Praia:

Rua Abilio Macedo 6 Caixa Postal 201 Praia.

Tel: +238-260-8900; After-Hours Emergencies: +238-991-3325; Regional Security Office: +238-260-8926.

Hours of Operation: 0800-1700, Monday-Friday.

OSAC Country Chapter(s)

Cabo Verde does not currently have an OSAC Country Chapter. Contact [OSAC's Africa team](#) with any questions.

Cabo Verde Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise normal precautions in Cabo Verde. Travelers should exercise increased caution in Praia due to crime.

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Praia as being a **CRITICAL**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cabo Verde, indicating that there may be widespread violent crime and/or organized crime present in the country, and/or that local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.

Most crimes in Cabo Verde seek financial gain (e.g., pickpocketing, burglary, and armed robbery), inspired in part by high unemployment and the growing drug trade throughout the islands. Petty crime and burglary are common in Cabo Verde, especially at marketplaces, festivals, street fairs, and public gatherings. Criminals target anyone perceived to be affluent, regardless of nationality.

Many crimes involve groups of youth who, by national law, are immune from prosecution until they reach 16 years of age. Authorities detain those in conflict with the law who are aged 12-16 in a juvenile detention center. Muggings occur often, particularly at night and, and often involve violence and weapons. The perpetrators are predominantly males between the ages of 14 and 25 operating in groups of two or more.

Cabo Verde installed the Chinese “Safe City” video surveillance program in Praia in 2018. A second phase in 2019 included the islands of São Vicente, Sal, and Boa Vista. Authorities link the reduction in crime in Praia prior to the pandemic, in part, to this new project, and claim it has increased their ability to not only deter but also solve crimes. Citizens doubt the efficacy of the program, while passage of data to the Chinese government is a major privacy concern.

Though official crime statistics show a slight decrease in reported robberies and assaults since 2020, following a pre-pandemic increase in crime, public perception of a worsening crime wave suggests that what has actually dropped is the willingness of citizens to report crime due to fear of retaliation and very low case closure rates.

Many locals see reporting street crime, such as muggings, as a waste of time and effort due to the low probability that police will identify and apprehend culprits and return stolen belongings. Overall crime levels in Praia remain a concern for locals, U.S. government personnel, and foreigners. While the streets are crowded with walkers and joggers around dusk, they become largely empty of foot traffic after darkness due largely in part to fear of crime.

Crime is becoming more violent. The use of firearms in the commission of crimes used to be rare but is becoming more prevalent. Although the law requires special permission to own or possess a firearm, the availability of firearms has increased along with their use in crime. Homemade firearms are more commonly being replaced with illicitly imported commercial ones.

In Praia, the Sucupira (outdoor market) and Fazenda areas are especially prone to pickpocketing, muggings, and purse snatchings. Exercise great care in daylight and avoid each at night, especially if traveling alone. Due to inadequate lighting in many public areas, be especially vigilant after dark, if you must travel on foot, carry a flashlight to illuminate your path, and never go out alone. Muggings occur often, particularly at night and in more isolated areas, and often involve violence. Lock vehicle doors and keep windows up and avoid isolated places. Take similar precautions when visiting the areas surrounding the beach resorts on the islands of Maio, Boa Vista, and Sal.

Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping “K” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cabo Verde.

Kidnappings are not common in Cabo Verde.

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Praia as being a **LOW**-threat location for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cabo Verde.

There is no history of terrorism in Cabo Verde, nor information that threats of terrorism are increasing. Due to its history as being unpopulated prior to colonization, tribal, ethnic, and religious differences that are often major factors in terrorism in other locations do not exist.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Praia as being a **LOW**-threat location for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest “U” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cabo Verde. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

Elections/Political Stability

Cabo Verde’s democratic system and processes are well-established and stable. Portuguese influence, legacy, and political/judicial framework remain strong throughout Cabo Verde’s institutions. Political violence is virtually unknown. The country has been a stable democracy since its independence in 1974, with multiple peaceful transfers of power between different political parties after free and fair elections, most recently in the fall of 2021. The next presidential elections are scheduled for October 2026.

Protests & Demonstrations

Civil unrest and disorder are not common. There are occasional demonstrations over economic issues, but all such incidents have been peaceful. In August 2022, Cabo Verde experienced its largest demonstrations in years, in which several hundred people marched in Praia calling for improvements to public safety, the justice system, and employment opportunities. The march ended peacefully. Strikes and work stoppages may become slightly more frequent during periods of increased unemployment, but such upticks remain infrequent.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

Anti-U.S. or anti-Western sentiment is almost non-existent in Cabo Verde. The country maintains strong ties with the United States and many European nations, with a large diaspora in the United States and Europe.

Law Enforcement

The emergency line in Cabo Verde is **132**. Find other emergency contact information below.

- Santiago Island
 - Praia: 262-12-32
 - Cidade Velha: 267-11-32
 - Pedra Badejo: 269-13-32
 - Santa Catarina: 265-11-32
 - Tarrafal: 265-11-32
- Fogo Island
 - Mosteiros: 283-10-73
 - São Filipe: 281-11-32
- Brava Island
 - Cidade Nove Sintra: 285-11-32
- Maio Island
 - Cidade do Maio: 255-11-32
 - São Nicolau Island
 - Ribeira Brava: 235-22-32
- São Vicente Island
 - Mindelo: 231-46-31
- Sal Island
 - Espargos: 241-11-32
 - Santa Maria: 242-11-32
- Santo Antão Island
 - Ribeira Grande: 221-11-32
 - Porto Novo: 222-11-32

Two police agencies exist in Cabo Verde: the National Police under the Interior Ministry and the Judicial Police under the Justice Ministry. Police are professional and willing to confront crime but are hindered by lack of personnel and resources. Judicial Police have nearly all investigative authority, while National Police have all other police and security functions.

Police Response

Police are generally strong-willed, but their responsiveness is constrained by resources. In most cases of larceny, police do not recover stolen items. Limited resources affect police capacity to assist and responsiveness to crimes, as does prioritizing cases that are more serious. Even though law enforcement is working as best it can with limited resources, drug interdiction continues to be a problem for the country. There are only 75 maritime police officers to patrol all ten islands. Even though a police presence is visible, proactive policing is not as prevalent as in other countries; generally, police services are reactive. Language abilities beyond Portuguese and Creole are also very limited (some may know some French and Spanish), making it difficult

for tourists and others to report crime. The language barrier is of some concern as the U.S. tourist presence in Cabo Verde grows.

If police detain or question you, cooperate fully with the authorities; not doing so could prolong detention. Inform authorities of your status in the country, visiting purpose, and nationality, and request that they contact the U.S. Embassy. If needed, a detained U.S. citizen should contact American Citizen Services in the Embassy for assistance.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Cabo Verde, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [LGB Travelers](#)
- [Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Student Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travelers](#)

Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cabo Verde.

Cabo Verde enjoys a professional police force with an independent and professional judiciary, which has not had significant instances of arbitrary detention or official harassment. The law provides penalties of up to 15 years' imprisonment for conviction of corruption by officials, and the government generally implements the law effectively.

Incidents of corruption/bribery are not overt, nor do police typically solicit bribes. If such an activity occurs, report it immediately. Cabo Verdean officials remain committed to fighting official corruption and punishing abuse of power whenever reported.

Cybersecurity

U.S. citizens in Cabo Verde experience few to no problems relating to cybersecurity. The Embassy has received no recent reports of credit card skimming or other related cyber or computer-based crime. Take common-sense precautions, as cyber threats are a growing trend throughout the world.

Import/Export Restrictions

Avoid taking any firearms or ammunition into Cabo Verde. Anyone caught entering Cabo Verde with firearms or ammunitions may face severe penalties, including prison time.

There are no restrictions on the usage of satellite phones.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).