



OSAC Country Security Report

Cyprus

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

Embassy Contact Information

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OSAC Country Chapter

The Nicosia Country Council currently meets once a year and has approximately 10 members.

Contact [OSAC's Europe team](#) with any questions.

Cyprus Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication indicates that travelers should exercise normal precautions in Cyprus. Some areas have increased risk. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to enter the United Nations buffer zone at any place other than a designated crossing point.

Since 1974, the southern part of Cyprus has been under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. The northern part of Cyprus, administered by Turkish Cypriots, proclaimed itself the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC") in 1983. The United States does not recognize the "TRNC," nor does any country other than Turkey. A buffer zone patrolled by the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus separates the two sides.

Crime

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

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cyprus.

Cyprus is generally a safe country that experiences less violent crime than other European countries. However, crimes of opportunity do occur. Most street crimes are non-violent and non-confrontational, ranging from scams to petty theft. Street criminals are generally unarmed and not prone to gratuitous violence. Despite this general low risk of crime, it is worth noting that over the past year, there has been an increase in theft, robberies, and other crimes of opportunity linked to increased migrant flow into the country. Westerners or Western interests are not specifically targeted.

Although residential burglaries occur infrequently, there has been an increase in attempted burglaries over the past year. Burglars are more likely to target empty residences and homes without an alarm or other security precautions (e.g., shutters, additional locks on doors/windows). Burglaries of commercial establishments (e.g., jewelry shops, convenience stores, and sometimes banks) have also occurred.

Incidents linked to organized crime are a concern. Criminal incidents involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), incendiary devices, and small arms, primarily attributed to organized crime, occur infrequently. Online gambling is the originating cause of many crimes, including loan sharking, threats, blackmail, and even kidnapping. Sporadic bombings, shootings, and arson have occurred since 2010. These incidents typically involve conflicts between rival organized crime groups and are not associated with terrorism. The attacks usually mean to send a message to an intended recipient, but occasionally cause injury or fatality. These incidents have normally occurred in the late evening or early morning hours but may occur at any time. Most reported IEDs did not result in an explosion.

There are no areas on the island of Cyprus that are off limits to U.S. Embassy staff.

Tourist areas can experience petty crime. Rates of street crimes (e.g., pickpocketing, purse snatching) remain steady. Muggings and armed robberies are uncommon, but stories about these incidents have appeared in local media. Thefts of valuables left in plain sight in unattended vehicles do occur. The number of opportunistic crimes (e.g., pickpocketing, purse snatching, car break in, robbery, home burglary) rises during the holidays and the summer when many homes are vacant. Sexual assaults are uncommon but have occurred. Be alert and aware of your surroundings and of your personal belongings. Criminals often target those who are distracted, alone in an isolated area, or impaired.

Criminal activity in the northern part of Cyprus is reportedly low. The highest number of robberies in the Turkish Cypriot administrated area occur in Kyrenia, Famagusta, and northern Nicosia. Night clubs in the north have also presented foreign patrons with grossly inflated bar tabs, threatening customers who refuse to pay with bodily harm.

Kidnapping Threat

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

Cyprus is a trafficking destination for persons subjected to forced prostitution and labor. The government-controlled Republic of Cyprus (ROC) is a destination for sex trafficking, which occurs in private apartments and hotels, on the street, and within commercial sex outlets. Domestic laborers, agricultural workers, and foreign migrants are vulnerable for trafficking for forced labor. In the unrecognized “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (“TRNC”), sex trafficking is a significant problem. While prostitution is illegal under “TRNC” law, a trafficking “law” does not exist; nightclub workers, who live at the clubs, regularly report that employers seize their passports, leaving them little freedom of movement. Groups vulnerable to forced labor include domestic workers, asylum seekers, and foreign migrants working in the construction and agricultural sectors. Avoid so-called “night clubs” (topless bars), as they reportedly employ women trafficked to Cyprus for sexual exploitation.

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Cyprus as being a **MEDIUM**-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 Cyprus.

International terrorism continues to be a concern, as authorities only lightly scrutinize movement between EU member countries. Cyprus has vulnerabilities associated with the de facto political division of the island and the relative ease with which people can move across the buffer zone undetected.

Credible information indicates terrorist groups continue plotting possible near-term attacks in Europe. All European countries remain potentially vulnerable to attacks from transnational terrorist organizations, although there have been no recent terrorist attacks in Cyprus. Terrorist groups, including their associates, and lone-actor perpetrators inspired by such organizations, are intent on attacking U.S. citizens abroad. Terrorists are increasingly using less sophisticated methods of attack—including edged weapons, pistols, and vehicles—to target crowds more effectively. Frequently, their aim is unprotected or vulnerable targets.

Since the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attack in Israel and Israel’s subsequent reaction, there have been increased calls by terrorist organizations like ISIS and al-Qa’ida to attack targets in Europe. While there is no specific and credible terrorism threat in Cyprus, there is a general concern that radicalized lone-actor perpetrators could attack using knives, vehicle ramming, guns, incendiary devices, and other methods that do not require specialized knowledge, access, or training. Lone-actor perpetrators pose a serious risk due to their ability to remain undetected, at times, until operational and their willingness to attack civilian and soft targets.

Republic of Cyprus (ROC) authorities have taken enhanced security measures to prevent terrorist actions following Hamas’s October 7 attack on Israel. The Cyprus National Police have increased patrols at airports, harbors, marinas, and ports; have assessed high-threat targets –

mostly of Israeli and U.S. interests – and provided frequent patrols; have provided a police presence at all synagogues in Larnaca, Limassol, and Paphos; increased police coverage at the Israeli Embassy; placed officers during working hours of 28 schools identified as high-threat targets; and increased beat/foot patrols in various locations, including Eleftherias Square in Nicosia and Molos in Limassol.

Over the last year, the ROC and Israel have cooperated to foil an Iranian-ordered attack against Israelis and Jews in Cyprus. While neither the ROC nor Israel provided details, media reported two individuals were believed to be in the early stages of gathering intelligence on potential Israeli targets, having crossed into the ROC government controlled-area from the Turkish Cypriot-controlled area in the North. In a statement, Israel’s Mossad intelligence service noted concerns about Iranian use of the North of Cyprus “both for terrorism objectives and as an operational and transit area.”

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Cyprus 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 Cyprus. 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

In 2023, Cyprus held free and fair presidential elections. The president is elected for a five-year term. While far-right groups in Cyprus use increasing number of migrants to the island to try to show the current administration’s weaknesses, Cyprus is a politically stable country.

Protests & Demonstrations

Demonstrations in support of international movements such as world peace and the environment are common, largely peaceful, and focus on government buildings. Protesters tend to occupy streets and block the flow of traffic. Economic conditions in the north have also led to demonstrations, primarily by public sector workers. Recent demonstrations in Cyprus have focused on escalating tensions in the Middle East and the UK’s role in the crisis. In September 2024, pro-Palestinian demonstrators peacefully protested at the gates of the UK’s airbase in Akrotiri. The protest only had about 200 demonstrators who left after an hour, and appeared to be hosted by a political party, rather than a grassroots movement.

While most demonstrations are peaceful, protests can turn violent very quickly. In August 2023, police in Cyprus reportedly arrested 21 people and used tear gas as well as a water cannon after a group of Greek Cypriots wearing hoods and brandishing bats tried to attack protesting Syrians in the village of Chloraka. In September 2023, a march organized by right-wing

extremists escalated and turned violent when a mob of several hundred masked protesters marched through the streets of Limassol – the second largest city in Cyprus – shouting racist slogans, vandalizing shops and restaurants, and attacking people.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

Demonstrations against the United States in recent decades have been non-violent and focused on the U.S. foreign policy in the region. None of the demonstrations hindered the activities of U.S. private-sector organizations.

Law Enforcement

Police in the ROC enforce the law and combat criminal activity. Police report to the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. Units include traffic police, emergency response unit, crime investigations, and others. The president appoints the chief of police. Civilian authorities maintain effective control over the security forces. Members of the security forces have committed some abuses.

A substantial number of Turkish troops remain on the island. A buffer zone, or “Green Line,” patrolled by a UN peacekeeping force, separates the ROC and the unrecognized “TRNC.”

Police Response

Expect slower response times in rural areas. ROC police speak English. In the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, “authorities” do not speak English.

The emergency lines in the ROC are **199** and **112**.

In the “TRNC,” emergency contact number for the police is **155**.

ROC Divisional Police Headquarters:

- Nicosia: +357-22 80 20 20
- Limassol: +357-25 80 50 50
- Larnaka: +357-24 80 40 40
- Paphos: +357-26 80 60 60
- Ammochostos: +357-23 80 30 30

ROC Police/Citizens Communication Line: **1460**

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Cyprus, 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 Cyprus. If you are arrested or detained, ask police or prison officials to notify the [U.S. Embassy](#) immediately.

ROC law requires court warrants, and authorities cannot detain a person for more than one day unless a court granted an extension. Most periods of investigative detention do not exceed 10 days before the filing of formal charges. Authorities promptly inform detainees of the charges against them in a language they could understand.

In the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, “police” can keep detainees in custody for up to three months, but a “judge” needs to review the detention after the third day and every eight days thereafter. Turkish Cypriot “authorities” generally respect this right and usually informed detainees promptly of charges against them, although they often hold individuals believed to have committed a violent offense for longer periods without charge.

ROC law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implements the laws effectively. Although the government generally investigates and prosecutes cases of corruption, there have been numerous recent reports of government corruption. Private-sector concerns focus on the inertia in the system, as reflected in the ROC Auditor General’s annual reports, listing hundreds of alleged incidents of corruption and mismanagement in public administration that usually remain unpunished or unrectified.

Cybersecurity

Fraud-related crimes remain low in relation to population size, but cybercrimes are increasing. Cybersecurity should be a priority for any organization operating in Cyprus. OSAC cannot overstress the importance of using only legitimate software.

Financial crimes conducted over the internet have increased as scammers attempt to convince you to send them money. These fraudulent schemes can include claims that make it appear you are helping a loved one or a friend who has been injured or is in trouble, online dating/social networking services, inheritance notices, work permits/job offers, and claims of bank overpayments.

Import/Export Restrictions

If traveling with prescription medication, check with the Republic of Cyprus to ensure the medication is legal in Cyprus. Always carry your prescription medication in original packaging with your doctor's prescription. You should similarly confirm with authorities in the "TRNC" to ensure any medication you are carrying will not present problems. Contact the "Drug and Pharmacy Office" at +90392-2284156 or +90392-2284001.

There are no restrictions on the import and use of personal satellite products in Cyprus.

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](#).