



OSAC Country Security Report

Gabon

Published: April 24, 2025

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

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

U.S. Embassy Libreville:

Sablere neighborhood of Libreville, across the street from Hotel Onomo.
Tel: +241-11-45-71-00.

OSAC Country Chapter(s)

Gabon does not have an OSAC Country Chapter.

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

Gabon Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise increased caution in Gabon due to crime, civil unrest, and health and exercise increased caution in Libreville and Port Gentil due to crime which can include robbery, vehicle break-ins, and residential burglaries.

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Libreville as being a **HIGH**-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 Gabon, 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.

Reach police in Libreville at **+241.011.73.90.00** or **+241.011.76.48.90**, and in Port Gentil at **+241.011.55.29.12** or **+241.011.55.22.36**. In the event of an emergency, the local police are typically the first point of contact. However, police response is slow, and investigations are frequently never opened.

Most crimes against foreigners are non-violent confrontations, and are most often crimes of opportunity, though there have been some reports of foreigners robbed at knife- or machete-

point. These crimes include mugging, theft of unattended possessions, and pickpocketing. The items stolen most frequently during a robbery tend to be cash, cellular phones, and other electronic items. In January, a knife-wielding robber was arrested near the U.S. Embassy compound after robbing local pedestrians and the local Embassy guards.

Foreigners seldom experience physical harm when they comply with the perpetrator's demands. However, criminals will resort to force, if necessary, to conduct a robbery. Confrontations with their intended victims do not deter gangs and other groups. Crime among the local populace can be more violent.

Visitors should be particularly aware of their surroundings in congested urban areas, such as open-air markets or on the beach. While these areas are certainly more dangerous at night, daytime incidents have also occurred. Being in a crowded area does not ensure one's security. Some victims report being robbed in broad daylight in the presence of witnesses. Mob justice exists; suspects can find themselves pursued and beaten by bystanders.

Hotel rooms have historically been prime targets for theft, though the very best hotels in Libreville have policies in place to discourage employee theft and are quick to identify and remove perpetrators. Many hotels have basic security standards in place (24-hour guards, locking doors, and safes).

Vehicle break-ins and residential burglaries continue to be a problem in Libreville and Port Gentil. Burglaries and home invasions are occurring more frequently than in the past. In the past few years, U.S. Embassy Libreville received reports regarding residential break-ins and home invasions in the Sabliere neighborhood where many diplomatic facilities are located. While most burglaries occur when residents are away from their homes, criminals have entered residences while the occupants are asleep.

Unsophisticated scams are common. Scams include taking money for items and then failing to deliver the item purchased. Only pay for items you have seen and can take possession of immediately.

Travelers have paid roadside vendors to top-up their cellphone minutes and then not received the minutes. Establish top-ups through authorized vendors.

Gabon's established grocery stores, hotels and high-end restaurants have started taking credit and debit cards only recently, but there are occasional connectivity problems. Be prepared to pay cash even if an establishment advertises that it takes credit. When contemplating a large purchase, be prepared to visit several ATMs, possibly over the course of several days. At times, ATMs do not have cash available for withdrawal. There are no reports of card skimming in Libreville.

Crime continues to be more common in the capital, Libreville, and in Port Gentil, Gabon's second largest city, than in rural areas. Libreville and Port Gentil account for most of Gabon's

population and are home to the country's most affluent citizens. In urban and rural areas alike, police response can be slow, and capabilities are limited.

Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping "K" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Gabon.

There have been no recent high-profile kidnappings in the country of Gabon. Westerners have not historically been subject to kidnappings within the country.

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Libreville 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 Gabon.

Gabon suffers from extremely porous borders. Trafficking in wildlife and natural resources is a problem for local security forces, and at times involves well-armed foreigners. There exists the potential for these same trafficking routes to be used to facilitate terrorism.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Libreville 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 included a Civil Unrest "U" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Gabon, indicating that demonstrations, protests, and/or strikes occur and/or that local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond adequately. 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 the past, election cycles in Gabon have been marked by civil unrest and large-scale protests. Presidential elections that took place in August 2023 were marred by opposition reports of widespread fraud and irregularities. After Gabon's election commission announced former President Ali Bongo Ondimba's re-election to a third term, a group of military officers from Gabon's presidential guard unit placed President Bongo under arrest and declared General Brice Oligui Nguema as Transitional President of the transitional government.

On April 12, Gabon held its first presidential election since the 2023 military coup, with Brice Oligui Nguema securing 90.35% of the vote. Nguema will serve a seven-year term and is eligible

for one additional term. This election represents a significant milestone in Gabon's return to constitutional rule following the military-led transition.

While Gabon experienced significant civil unrest following the 2016 and 2023 elections, the 2025 elections passed largely peacefully and incident-free. This marked a notable shift in the country's political climate, reflecting a growing commitment to stability and democratic processes. The peaceful conduct of the 2025 elections can be attributed to several factors, including increased security measures, effective voter education campaigns, and the presence of international observers who ensured transparency and fairness. Additionally, the transitional government's efforts to engage with various political factions and civil society groups helped to foster a more inclusive and cooperative environment. The successful execution of the 2025 elections has been seen as a positive step towards consolidating democracy in Gabon and restoring public confidence in the electoral process.

Protests & Demonstrations

Strikes and union actions are common in Gabon and have occurred frequently over the past year. Small, sporadic protests relating to employment issues or disagreements with government decisions in outlying areas/villages were common throughout 2023. In December 2023, between 50-100 people held a peaceful turned violent march in Tchibanga, Nyanga province, in response to a three-day electricity shortage. Protesters blocked roads with improvised barriers and threw stones at police. The police intervened using force and tear gas.

Since Gabon's coup in 2023, there have been periodic demonstrations in support of the country's military rulers. The days following the coup saw demonstrations primarily in Libreville and Port Gentil in support of General Nguema and celebrating the end of President Bongo's presidency. In January 2024, opposition and civil society groups organized demonstrations in Libreville, Oyem, and Franceville in opposition to sanctions raised by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) against the junta.

Avoid large crowds, political gatherings, and demonstrations. Political gatherings and demonstrations have the potential to turn violent; police and security forces typically disperse crowds using tear gas or other force.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

Most Gabonese have a favorable view of U.S. nationals and of the United States.

Law Enforcement

Reach police in Libreville at **+241.011.73.90.00** or **+241.011.76.48.90**, and in Port Gentil at **+241.011.55.29.12** or **+241.011.55.22.36**. In the event of an emergency, the local police are typically the first point of contact. However, police response is slow, and investigations are frequently never opened. Prosecutions are very slow, if they are even initiated.

The main law enforcement entities in Gabon are the National Police and the Gabonese Gendarmerie. The Gendarmerie, a branch of the Defense Ministry, is the principal agency in charge of law enforcement. The National Police, under the Interior Ministry, are responsible for traffic enforcement and security at major events. The Police Judiciare are responsible for conducting criminal investigations related directly to prosecution. People may often encounter the Republican Guard in their travels. Elements of the armed forces and the Republican Guard sometimes perform internal security functions.

There are reports of police, gendarmes, and military members seeking bribes to supplement their salaries, often while stopping vehicles at legal roadblocks to check vehicle registration and identity documents.

Police Response

The police and security forces often lack communications equipment, weapons and ammunition, and vehicles, limiting their ability to respond to routine and emergency calls. Many gendarme and police stations have only one vehicle and often rely on personal cellular phones to coordinate any police response. Any response is often slow and limited generally to writing a report or taking statements.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Gabon, 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 Gabon.

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for detainees or persons arrested to challenge the legal basis and arbitrary nature of their detention in court, but the government does not always respect these provisions.

The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials, but the government does not implement the law effectively. According to media and NGOs, officials frequently engage in corrupt practices with impunity. Some police are inefficient and corrupt. There are reports of police, gendarmes, and military members seeking bribes to supplement their

salaries, often while stopping vehicles at legal roadblocks to check vehicle registration and identity documents. In July 2021, taxi drivers demonstrated to protest police harassment, including exacting bribes.

According to reports from the African immigrant community, in order to exact bribes, police and other security force members often detain and falsely accuse noncitizen Africans of lacking valid resident permits or identification documents.

There have been numerous recent reports of corruption by government officials. Following the August 2023 coup, former President Bongo's son, Nouredin Bongo Valentin, was charged with corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and money laundering in September. Shortly after, former President Bongo's wife, First Lady Slyvia Bongo, was charged with money laundering, embezzling public funds, forgery, and falsification of records. She was later jailed that October.

Cybersecurity

Cybercrime is a growing concern in Gabon, especially scams involving Airtel Money and other online payment systems.

Import/Export Restrictions

All categories of products may be imported into Gabon with two exceptions – sugar and eggs. The Interior Ministry regulates the private import of all firearms and munitions. Automobiles more than three years old may not be imported, although there is a diplomatic exemption. Gabon requires government approval for the usage of satellite internet.

While the use of satellite phones is not prohibited, the inconsistent behavior of customs officials at ports-of-entry make the importation of such devices difficult. The use of satellite data devices is prohibited.

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](#).