



# OSAC Country Security Report

## Kyrgyzstan

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

### Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

#### U.S. Embassy Bishkek

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### OSAC Country Chapters

The Bishkek Country Chapter meets quarterly. Interested private-sector security managers should contact [OSAC's Asia team](#) with any questions.

### Kyrgyzstan 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 Kyrgyzstan.

Exercise increased caution to areas within approximately 30 kilometers of the border with Tajikistan. The March 13, 2025, signing and subsequent ratifying of a bilateral agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have facilitated the resumption of cross-border movement, but the situation remains fluid. As of March 2025, two checkpoints on the border are open for transit. There are no travel restrictions for Americans crossing the border. However, visitors to the Batken region (especially the Batken and Leilek districts) should exercise caution and remain vigilant due to a recent history of border clashes.

U.S. government employees working in the Kyrgyz Republic are restricted from traveling to the Batken province without prior authorization from the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek.

### Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Bishkek 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 Kyrgyzstan.

The crime emergency line in Kyrgyzstan is **102**.

The greatest threat to travelers is street and opportunistic crime. Violent crime is rare and there are very occasional bride kidnappings, but foreigners are not targeted. There are very occasional reports of foreigners getting mugged or beat up at night at bars or restaurants, but alcohol is always involved. Foreigners are not specifically targeted by criminals. Reports of credit card, internet, and ATM fraud are rare. Criminal activity is more prevalent in larger metropolitan areas and at night.

Although relatively uncommon, there have been reports of muggings of foreigners in downtown (or northern) Bishkek at night, and in areas outside of Bishkek. Other common crimes affecting foreigners include auto theft and pickpocketing in crowded places such as markets—especially Bishkek’s Osh Bazaar—large department stores, internet cafes, and on public transportation. There are reports of petty theft and pickpocketing in local open-air markets, bazaars, and other crowded places. Kyrgyzstan’s Country Information Page recommends travelers limit travel to Batken province (Oblast) due to crime, but there are no recent reports of foreigners becoming victims of crime in the area.

While violent crime is rare in Bishkek, attackers do not always avoid violent confrontation with their victims.

### Kidnapping Threat

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

Kidnapping of foreigners is very rare. The cultural practice of bridal kidnapping typically occurs in rural areas. Foreigners are unlikely to be targeted or become a victim of bridal kidnapping.

### Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Bishkek 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 Kyrgyzstan.

The Kyrgyz Republic’s counterterrorism (CT) efforts continued to concentrate on counter violent extremism (CVE), rooting out “extremists,” countering violent extremism, preventing those returning from conflicts abroad from engaging in terrorist activities, and repatriating foreign terrorist fighters (FTF)-associated family members. The Kyrgyz government restricts public information on national security issues, making it difficult to assess the efficacy of its CT operations or the extent of the threat. The country did remain vulnerable to transnational threats, especially in its remote southern region, where ill-defined and porous borders allow for the relatively free movement of people and illicit goods. According to government statistics,

since 2014 an estimated 850 Kyrgyz citizens have left the country to join terrorism groups. The government faces limitations on its ability to rehabilitate, investigate, and prosecute, as appropriate, returning FTFs owing to a lack of expertise, resources, and potential shortcomings in its legal framework.

## Political Violence and Civil Unrest

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

The 2020 parliamentary elections were heavily criticized for extensive vote-buying and fraud, prompting protestors to converge on Ala-Too Square from all over Kyrgyzstan to demand change. The following two weeks of insecurity were marked by an assassination attempt against an ex-president, burning and ransacking of government offices downtown, lack of uniformed police presence in the streets, the declaration of a state of emergency, and imposition of a curfew. The military deployed to the outskirts of Bishkek. Order was restored when the President resigned, and an interim government took power.

Following the annulment of the results of the 2020 elections and the subsequent protests, Sadyr Japarov was elected president in January 2021 and a snap parliamentary election, originally scheduled for June 2021, was held that November. Japarov also introduced a new constitution, which was ratified in a May 2021 vote, dramatically expanding presidential powers. After these events, Kyrgyzstan was rated “Not Free” by the [Freedom House](#) ranking system. The next national elections are slated for 2026.

Security on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border improved following a 2023 demarcation agreement between the two countries. The situation on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border remains more volatile, with major clashes breaking out in September 2022. The Kyrgyz and Tajik governments are currently holding talks to delimit the contested areas of the border, but a final agreement has not yet been announced. Security forces monitor border areas and often conduct operations there. Ambiguous borders, particularly around six enclaves in the Batken Oblast, can give rise to periodic skirmishes over water and land rights between Tajik and Kyrgyz civilians, as well as border guards along the undefined borders. These skirmishes can turn violent. Though instability in border areas can be an issue, foreign travelers are unlikely to find themselves in the crossfire since access to these areas is tightly controlled.

## Protests & Demonstrations

Demonstrations are rare due to a ban on demonstrations outside a single location in Bishkek. Despite the ban, spontaneous demonstrations sometimes take place in response to political or economic issues, such as protests in May 2024 targeting Indian and Pakistani students studying in Bishkek.

Violent protests surrounding the arrest of former president Almazbek Atambaev occurred in Bishkek in 2019; as a result, one police officer died, and several others were injured.

## Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

U.S. and other Western travelers may experience anti-U.S. or anti-western sentiment in Kyrgyzstan. There is considerable anti-U.S. propaganda in the local media that originates from Russia; it is difficult to assess the impact of this on local sentiment. However, outright acts of anti-U.S. sentiment or hostility directed against U.S. nationals by Kyrgyz citizens are rare. There have been no specific incidents that are attributable to tensions between Russia and the United States. While there are locals who maintain anti-American opinions, sometimes strongly, they are unlikely to act on them and there are no recent known anti-American incidents. Regional religious extremist groups express anti-U.S. sentiment and may attempt to target U.S. government or private interests in Kyrgyzstan.

## Law Enforcement

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) is the central Kyrgyz law enforcement body in charge of investigating of all types of crimes, including narcotics trafficking and combating violent extremism. The Traffic Police (GAI) is the MVD entity responsible for the regulation of traffic and investigating traffic accidents. The State Committee for National Security (GKNB) is Kyrgyzstan's main security agency, with broad functions akin to those of an intelligence gathering and a law enforcement agency, specializing in counterintelligence and counterterrorism activities; the agency also controls the presidential security service. The Kyrgyz border guard service was recently incorporated into the GKNB. The Prosecutor General's Office prosecutes all crimes. Civilian authorities have at times not maintained effective control over the security forces. There have been credible reports that members of the security forces committed some abuses.

## Police Response

The police are generally responsive to reports of crimes. Police and security forces lack proper salaries and equipment. Officials are known to solicit bribes to supplement their insufficient incomes. Police officers rarely speak English. Speed traps and traffic stops are common. It is illegal to move a vehicle involved in a vehicle accident.

Harassment and extortion by imposters, genuine law enforcement, and other officials does occur. Do not act upon police requests, whether in civilian dress or in uniform, if they have no

official identification. Do not get into cars with anyone you do not know, even if the person claims to be a police officer. Never voluntarily give your wallet to anybody. If pressured by a police officer, tell the officer that you will report his behavior to the U.S. Embassy and to the officer's supervisors. Try to obtain the officer's name, badge number, and license plate number, and note where the incident happened.

The legal blood alcohol level for driving in Kyrgyzstan is zero. Driving under the influence may land you immediately in jail, no matter how little you consumed.

## Travelers with Special Considerations

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

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [Gay and Lesbian Travelers](#)
- [Accessibility Needs](#)
- [Studying Abroad](#)
- [Faith-Based Travel](#)

## 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 Kyrgyzstan.

Corruption is a serious problem in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz law provides criminal penalties for public officials convicted of corruption, but the government does not implement the law effectively and officials frequently engage in corrupt practices with impunity. Civil society and media often report on incidents of government corruption.

According to Transparency International, the government appears to investigate and prosecute corruption cases selectively. There were some cases of corruption, but authorities are making an effort to crack down on offenders.

## Cybersecurity

In the last few years, there have been significant incidents of cyberattacks on host government websites, infecting servers with malware as a result. Local media outlets occasionally report foreign government hacking attacks. Exercise caution with your electronic devices; try to keep them in your possession, keep firewalls and antivirus software active and updated, and use virtual private networks (VPNs) to protect your devices from unauthorized access.

## Import/Export Restrictions

It is illegal to hunt without a proper license. You must get a permit from the Kyrgyz government prior to arrival in country to import or own firearms in the country. Foreigners who do not have official permission to hunt or take animals out of the country may face criminal and/or civil charges.

There are no known restrictions on the import 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](#).*