



# OSAC Country Security Report

## Liberia

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

### Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

#### **U.S. Embassy Monrovia:**

502 Benson Street, Monrovia.

Tel: +231 77 677 7000; MSG Post One: +231 77 677 7001; Regional Security Office: +231 77 677 7112; American Citizen Services: +231 77 677 7111.

Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 0800-1730, Friday 0800-1300.

### OSAC Country Chapter(s)

The Monrovia OSAC chapter is active.

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

### Liberia 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 Liberia due to crime and civil unrest.

### Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Monrovia 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 Liberia, 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.

Crime remains at a critical level throughout the country, owing to growing public discontent with Liberia's faltering economy and dysfunctional judicial system. Reports of home and residential compound invasions are common, as are violent robberies in urban areas and on public beaches. Local police lack the resources to respond effectively to serious crimes and courts rarely secure convictions for criminal activities

There has been an increase in reporting of non-violent crimes. Many of these crimes are “snatch-and-grabs” of electronics, purses, bags, and backpacks; vehicular vandalism; and vehicle break-ins categorized as theft. These crimes of opportunity usually occur in densely populated areas throughout the country. Most snatch-and-grabs involve young male assailants between the ages of 13 and 25. Criminals often carry knives or homemade handguns and occasionally work in small groups to target unsuspecting victims. Most of these cases end without violence if the victim is compliant.

Crimes resulting in the use of lethal force have also increased. Crimes of this nature tend to target local nationals, not foreigners. Violent crimes consist of robberies, burglaries, muggings, assaults, mysterious deaths, mob justice, and ritualistic killings. The perpetrators, usually carrying a knife or firearm, often use force even when the victim complies with the assailant’s demands, a practice that was uncommon during previous years. These crimes generally do not target foreign nationals but may impact their routine and normal activities.

Vehicle thefts are not commonly reported; when reported, vehicles are rarely recovered. There are cases of international car thefts where authorities traced stolen vehicles discovered in Liberia to source countries through international law enforcement partnerships. Crimes of this nature are subject to investigation but go unprosecuted due to a corrupt and ineffective judicial process.

Reports of home invasions in 2023 plagued local nationals at higher levels; particularly in outlying areas of Monrovia lacking community security organizations. Most home invasions occur overnight, between 2300-0400, and usually involve multiple armed assailants using a combination of homemade guns or semi-automatic weapons.

Vigilante justice is common in greater Monrovia, and in most cases, directed at miscreants engaged in property theft or domestic abuse. Members of a community often refer to these criminals as “Zogos.” Residential burglaries occur throughout the year but are more common during the rainy season (generally May to November), when there are fewer people moving about to notice outdoor criminal activity, which is largely obscured by rainy conditions. Lack of effective security measures make home invasions more inviting.

Sexual assault and rape are the most reported violent crimes. The overwhelming majority of sexual assault victims are Liberian nationals, and many are minors. Sexual violence against expatriates in Liberia is uncommon but has been reported at public beaches.

There are no administratively imposed curfews or off-limit areas in Liberia for U.S. Embassy personnel. U.S. Chief of Mission personnel may not drive outside the greater Monrovia area (which includes Roberts International Airport (ROB)) or between counties after dark. Although the Regional Security Office has not designated any areas off-limits, public beaches and the area in Monrovia known as “Red Light” are less safe due to sparse law enforcement and security presence. Use caution when visiting any public beach, the areas of greater Monrovia known as Red Light, Waterside, Congo Town, ELWA Junction, and all market areas. Petty crimes and armed robberies are common in those areas, especially after dark. Border areas with

neighboring states are more susceptible to a variety of criminal activities due to the lack of security presence and effective security enforcement at most border crossing areas.

## Kidnapping Threat

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

Kidnapping is uncommon in Liberia.

## Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Monrovia 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 Liberia.

There exists a real and growing threat of regional terrorism due to the operational presence of known terrorist entities in West Africa’s Sahel region. Liberia has not experienced terrorist attacks, but vulnerabilities exist given the country’s porous borders, and the increase in terror activities by transnational and international terrorist organizations such as al-Qai’da in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), Hizb’allah, and the Macina Liberation Front (MLF).

## Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Monrovia 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 included a Civil Unrest “U” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Liberia, indicating that demonstrations, protests, and/or strikes occur frequently, 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 December 2020, Liberia held midterm senatorial elections that resulted in several small-scale protests that got out of control, with protesters burning vehicles and several buildings. The two dominant political parties are continuously at odds, and the current ruling party has alienated specific groups of people, including certain government employees.

In October and November 2023, Liberia held general elections to elect the President, House of Representatives, and half of the Senate. No presidential candidate won a majority of votes in the first round, prompting a runoff held in November. In the lead up to elections, Liberia experienced several demonstrations related to the elections and biometric voter registration process. Several of these demonstrations turned violent and prompted violent responses from security forces. Following the release of election results, sporadic protests and celebrations occurred throughout Monrovia. In one instance, supporters of the Unity Party celebrated along Broad Street in Monrovia. A vehicle ramming incident occurred at this event, resulting in 20 injuries and three deaths. It is unclear if the driver intentionally drove their vehicle into the crowd. Liberia was internationally recognized for successfully holding a democratic election with a relatively smooth transition of power.

## Protests & Demonstrations

Currently large demonstrations are rare but can develop rapidly and without advance notice.

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

U.S. citizens are generally accepted and well-liked in Liberia and are not specific targets for criminal activity due to their nationality. However, foreigners have been targets in Liberia due to their race/ethnicity.

## Law Enforcement

Liberia does not have a functioning centralized dispatch service. Instead, each LNP zone has its own contact number. Contact the LNP Chief of Patrol at **+231 (0)880-800-117**.

Following the departure of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2018, Liberian security forces took over the responsibility of maintaining nationwide security for the first time since 2003. Some security institutions such as the LNP, the principal law enforcement body in the country, have struggled to maintain the effective nationwide law enforcement and security functions that UNMIL once provided. However, other law enforcement and security agencies such as the Liberian Immigration Service, the Liberian Revenue Authority, the Department of Customs, and the Liberian Drug Enforcement Agency have improved their capabilities and effectiveness.

Safeguarding the nation's porous borders and providing effective security outside of Monrovia continues to be problematic. These challenges are compounded by the establishment of illegal checkpoints and solicitation of unauthorized "fines" from vehicle operators, actions which erode public confidence in security officers. Be sure to treat police officers in the same manner you would when interacting with a U.S. law enforcement official. Ignoring reasonable lawful orders, becoming belligerent, or showing lack of respect will only exacerbate the situation and could result in arrest.

## Police Response

The primary law enforcement agency is the LNP. LNP has struggled to develop its law enforcement capabilities. The LNP have a strong presence in Monrovia, but less of a presence outside of the capital city. Locals and visitors alike might experience inconsistency in the level of responsiveness and services provided. Due to a lack of resources, the LNP is limited in its ability to respond to criminal acts or provide full services to crime victims. Travelers should anticipate that stolen property will not likely be recovered, nor are perpetrators likely to be brought to justice.

It is common for LNP officers to request bribes from travelers at major intersections or police checkpoints during hours of darkness, or request funding for fuel to respond to a report of a crime. Travelers may be detained by police officers soliciting bribes. You are encouraged to carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times as proof of identity and citizenship. If detained or arrested, you should ask to contact the U.S. Embassy immediately. Liberian security services, in particular the LNP, are not always able to cope successfully with myriad security challenges, which has resulted in increased public criticism of LNP response. The LNP sometimes employs unorthodox practices, such as throwing rocks at protestors or dispensing tear gas at underage protestors to quell demonstration violence.

## Travelers with Special Considerations

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

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court. The government does not always observe these prohibitions and rights. Police officers and magistrates frequently detain citizens for owing money to a complainant and bribes for release from custody are common. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) reports magistrate court judges continue to issue writs of arrest unilaterally, without approval or submission by the city solicitors. In general, police must have warrants issued by a magistrate to

make arrests. The law allows for arrests without a warrant if the necessary paperwork is filed immediately afterwards for review by the appropriate authority. Nonetheless, arrests are often made without judicial authorization and warrants sometimes issued without sufficient evidence. Police sometimes request bribes to effect arrests for prosecuting authorities.

The law provides criminal penalties for bribery, abuse of office, economic sabotage, and other corruption-related offenses committed by officials, but the government does not implement the law effectively. There have been numerous reports of government corruption. Officials frequently engage in corrupt practices with impunity.

## Cybersecurity

Being primarily a cash economy, the occurrence of credit card theft and fraud in Liberia is low compared to other parts of Africa and the United States. Credit card terminals do exist in major hotels and some supermarkets. Inform your credit card providers of any intended use in Liberia, check credit card statements shortly after transactions occur, and monitor credit card statements closely following use in Liberia. Most of the wire fraud that is connected to Liberia happens to unsuspecting foreigners who fall victim to monetary schemes.

Advance-fee fraud schemes are prevalent throughout Africa and pose a danger of serious financial loss to victims. These scams, otherwise known as 419 scams—so-named after the section of Nigeria’s criminal code addressing financial crimes—typically begin when the victim receives an unsolicited communication (usually e-mail, text message, dating site correspondence, or social media message) from an unknown entity who promises quick financial gain. The fraudster promises a monetary payment for such services as hospital stays, inheritances, mineral exploration rights, land or property development, but then requires a series of "advance fees" to be paid, such as fees for legal documents or taxes. The final payoff does not exist; the purpose of the scam is simply to collect the advance fees as frequently and as long as possible. Carefully check any unsolicited business proposal originating in Liberia before committing any funds, providing any goods or services, or undertaking any travel, particularly if the proposal involves mining or the sale of gold and diamonds. There has also been an increase in romance fraud as Liberians initiate internet relationships with a U.S. citizen for the purpose of eventually requesting money.

A large-scale distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack crippled the Liberian internet infrastructure in 2016. The DDoS attack was reported to have infected computers and many internet-connected devices such as DVR players and digital cameras. No major cybersecurity incidents have been reported in Liberia since 2016. Cybercrime remains a low/moderate threat due to the lack of electricity and computer ownership throughout the country.

## Import/Export Restrictions

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](#).*