



Travel Warning: Colombia

Terrorism

Western Hemisphere > Colombia

2/21/2012

The Department of State reminds U.S. citizens of the dangers of travel to Colombia. Security in Colombia has improved significantly in recent years, including in tourist and business travel destinations such as Cartagena and Bogota, but violence by narco-terrorist groups continues to affect some rural areas and large cities. This replaces the Travel Warning for Colombia issued July 22, 2011, to update information on recent security incidents and terrorist activity. Terrorist activity remains a threat throughout the country. On June 16, 2011, a satchel bomb exploded at a local monument in uptown Bogota, resulting in some damage to adjoining buildings, but no fatalities or injuries. On October 5, 2011, a grenade was thrown at a cafe in the Chico neighborhood of Bogota, injuring four bystanders. Three members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's (FARC) Jorge Briceño Suarez Bloc were later arrested for the incident. Small towns and rural areas of Colombia can still be extremely dangerous due to the presence of narco-terrorists. While the Embassy possesses no information concerning specific and credible threats against U.S. citizens in Colombia, we strongly encourage you to exercise caution and remain vigilant.

The incidence of kidnapping in Colombia has diminished significantly from its peak in 2000, and has remained relatively consistent for the past two years. Nevertheless, terrorist groups such as FARC, the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other criminal organizations continue to kidnap and hold civilians for ransom or as political bargaining chips. No one is immune from kidnapping on the basis of occupation, nationality, or other factors. Kidnapping in rural areas is of particular concern.

In 2011, one U.S. citizen was kidnapped in a rural part of the country and held for ransom before being rescued, and another was abducted from in front of a hotel in Medellin and later found murdered. Although the U.S. government places the highest priority on the safe recovery of kidnapped U.S. citizens, it is U.S. policy not to make concessions to or strike deals with kidnapers. Consequently, the U.S. government's ability to assist kidnapping victims is limited.

U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia are permitted to travel to major cities in the country, but normally only by air. They may not use inter- or intra-city bus transportation, or travel by road outside urban areas at night. U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia must file a request to travel to any area in Colombia that is outside of two general vicinities. The first vicinity is outlined by the cities of Bogota, Anolaima, Cogua,



and Sesquile. The second vicinity is on the Highway 90 corridor that connects Cartagena, Barranquilla, and Santa Marta. All U.S. citizens in Colombia are urged to follow these precautions and exercise extra caution outside of the aforementioned areas.

For more detailed information on staying safe in Colombia, please see the State Department's Country Specific Information for Colombia. For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Bureau of Consular Affairs' internet web site, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens living or traveling in Colombia are encouraged to enroll with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to obtain updated information on travel and security within Colombia. For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Colombia, please contact the U.S. Embassy or the closest U.S. Consulate as listed below.

The U.S. Embassy is located at Calle 24 Bis No. 48-50 Bogota, D.C., Colombia. Mailing address: Carrera 45 No. 24B-27 Bogota, D.C., Colombia. In case of a serious emergency that jeopardizes the health or safety of a U.S. citizen in Colombia, please call the Embassy at (571) 275-2000; Embassy fax: (571) 275-4501; Consular Section phone: (571) 275-4900. The Embassy's American Citizens Services office provides routine information at <http://bogota.usembassy.gov>. For questions not answered there, inquiries may be sent by email to ACSBogota@state.gov.

The U.S. Consular Agency in Barranquilla, which accepts passport applications and performs notarial services, is located at Calle 77B, No. 57-141, Piso 5, Centro Empresarial Las Américas, Barranquilla, Atlántico, Colombia; telephone (575) 369-0419; fax (57-5) 353-5216. In case of an emergency in the Barranquilla/north coast area, please contact the Embassy in Bogota at (571) 275-2000 which will forward the call to our Consular Agent.