



Travel Warning: Algeria

Terrorism

Near East > Algeria > Algiers

9/13/2012

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Algeria. This Travel Warning replaces the Travel Warning for Algeria dated May 4, 2012, to update information on the current security situation in Algeria and the continuing threat posed by terrorism, and to reiterate information on security incidents and recommendations on security awareness.

The Department of State urges U.S. citizens who travel to Algeria to evaluate carefully the risks posed to their personal safety. There is a high threat of terrorism and kidnappings in Algeria. This kidnapping threat was noted in the Department of State's Worldwide Caution dated July 18, 2012. Although the major cities are heavily policed, attacks could still potentially take place. The majority of terrorist attacks, including bombings, false roadblocks, kidnappings, and ambushes occur in areas of the country east and south of Algiers.

Al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is active and operates throughout Algeria. They claimed credit for the December 2007 United Nations bombings in Algeria, the last major attack in the capital, and have pledged to carry out more attacks. In February 2011, AQIM claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of an Italian citizen and her Algerian driver; and also the suicide bomb attack at the Algerian Military Academy in Cherchell, 48 miles west of Algiers. The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) is also active in Algeria. In October 2011, they kidnapped two Spanish nationals and an Italian national from a refugee camp 1,088 miles southwest of Algiers in Tindouf. In March 2012, MUJAO claimed responsibility for the car bomb attack at an Algerian military base 1,196 miles south of Algiers in Tamanrasset and a similar car bomb attack at another base 478 miles south/southeast of Algiers in Ouargla.

The Department of State recommends that U.S. citizens avoid overland travel in Algeria. U.S. citizens who reside in or travel to Algeria should take personal security measures to include stocking adequate reserves of medicine, food, and water for use during an emergency. Additionally, sporadic episodes of civil unrest have been known to occur, such as the riots in Algiers and many other cities from January 2011 to the present. U.S. citizens should avoid large crowds and demonstrations because even demonstrations that are meant to be peaceful can become violent and unpredictable. U.S. citizens should be alert and aware of their surroundings and maintain security awareness at all times. U.S. citizens should regularly monitor the local news media for current news and information.



Visitors to Algeria are advised to stay only in hotels where adequate security is provided. All visitors to Algeria should remain alert, avoid predictable travel patterns and maintain a low profile. U.S. citizens should avoid political rallies of all kinds. Most political gatherings are peaceful but can turn violent without notice.

The U.S. government considers the potential threat to U.S. Embassy personnel assigned to Algiers sufficiently serious to require them to live and work under significant security restrictions. These practices limit, and may occasionally prevent, the movement of U.S. Embassy officials and the provision of consular services in certain areas of the country. The Government of Algeria requires U.S. Embassy personnel to seek permission to travel to the Casbah within Algiers or outside the province of Algiers and to have a security escort. Travel to the military zone established around the Hassi Messaoud oil center requires Government of Algeria authorization. Daily movement of Embassy personnel in parts of Algiers is limited, and prudent security practices are required at all times. Travel by Embassy personnel within certain areas of the city requires coordination with the U.S. Embassy's Regional Security Office.

U.S. citizens living or traveling in Algeria are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive the latest travel updates and to obtain updated information on security within Algeria. By enrolling, U.S. citizens make it easier for the Embassy to contact them in case of emergency.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens living abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Alerts, Travel Warnings, and Country Specific Information can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. You can also download our free Smart Traveler App, available through iTunes and the Android market, to have travel information at your fingertips.

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, on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The U.S. Embassy is located at 5 Chemin Cheikh Bachir El-Ibrahimi in the El Biar district of Algiers, and can be reached by telephone at (213) 770 08 20 00. The fax is {213} 21 98 22 99. The consular section email is ACSAlgiers@state.gov.