



Travel Warning: Niger

Travel Health and Safety; Threats

Africa > Niger > Niamey

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The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Niger, and urges extreme caution due to the military conflict in neighboring Mali and continued kidnapping threats against Westerners in Niger. This replaces the Travel Warning for Niger dated November 16, 2012 to update information on security concerns.

On January 11, the Malian military launched military operations against terrorist groups that have been in control of northern Mali. As a result, terrorist groups have stepped up their rhetoric calling for additional attacks or kidnappings against Westerners, particularly those whose countries are linked to support for international military intervention in Mali. We encourage U.S. citizens to exercise caution, remain vigilant, maintain situational awareness at all times, and take appropriate security precautions to ensure personal safety.

The border region with Mali continues to be of specific concern since the Malian government's loss of control over its northern region in early 2012. The border is porous, and there are frequent reports of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and other terrorist or rebel groups crossing into Niger. The Government of Niger has increased its security forces in the border area, but the situation remains unstable and travel there is not advised. The U.S. Embassy in Niamey will continue to monitor this situation closely and update U.S. citizens by via "Security Messages for U.S. Citizens." These security messages will be posted on U.S. Embassy Niamey's website at http://niamey.usembassy.gov/niger/warden_messages.html. Because of security threats, the U.S. Embassy in Niamey continues to restrict the travel of U.S. government employees and official visitors in the areas north of Niamey. The U.S. Embassy also continues to evaluate proposed travel and official and personal activities for employees on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with Nigerien security authorities. Recently, the possibility of violence related to extremist and criminal groups coming from northern Nigeria has led the Nigerien government to recommend armed escorts for travel in far eastern Niger.

AQIM, a group designated as a terrorist organization by the Department of State since 2002, continues its threats to kidnap Westerners in Niger, including U.S. citizens, and has been successful in kidnapping Europeans in the region. On January 7, 2011, two French nationals were kidnapped in the capital city of Niamey. They were found dead less than 24 hours later following a rescue attempt by French and Nigerien military forces. In September 2010, seven people, including five French citizens, a Togolese national, and a Malagasy citizen were



kidnapped by AQIM from the northern mining town of Arlit. Four French citizens are still being held hostage by AQIM. Although there have been no kidnappings of Westerners in Niger since January 2011, the Department of State Worldwide Caution dated July 18, 2012 reminds U.S. citizens to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness when traveling in the region.

As a result of safety and security concerns, some organizations, including foreign companies, NGOs, and private aid organizations, have temporarily suspended operations in Niger or withdrawn some family members and/or staff.

Although the U.S. government places the highest priority on the safe recovery of kidnapped U.S. citizens, it is U.S. government policy not to make concessions to kidnappers.

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey strongly encourages U.S. citizens who travel to or remain in Niger despite this Travel Warning to enroll in the Smart Travel Enrollment Program (STEP) so you can receive the most up-to-date security information. Please keep all of your information in STEP current. It is important when enrolling or updating information to include multiple phone numbers and email addresses to facilitate communication in the event of an emergency.

U.S. citizens should consult the Country Specific Information for Niger and the Worldwide Caution, both located on the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs website. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. Download our Smart Traveler app for iPhone and Android for the latest information. If you don't have internet access, current information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or, for callers from other countries, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey is located on Rue des Ambassades. The Embassy's telephone number is (227) 20-72-26-61. You can contact the Embassy after-hours for emergencies at telephone: (227) 20-72-31-41. [Click here to visit the Embassy website.](#)