



Brazil 2014 Crime and Safety Report: Recife

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Murder; Kidnapping; Cargo Security; Floods; Carjacking; Riots/Civil Unrest; Insurgencies; Landslides and mudslides; Drug Trafficking; Fraud; Financial Security

Western Hemisphere > Brazil; Western Hemisphere > Brazil > Recife

4/1/2014

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

The U.S. Department of State rates the criminal threat level in Recife as Critical. Since 2007, the government of Pernambuco state has engaged in a concerted effort to reduce crime levels through an initiative called Pacto Pela Vida and has reduced crime rates progressively each year.

Crime Threats

Crime is the principal threat to visitors in Brazil. Street crime remains a problem for visitors and local residents alike, especially in the evenings and late at night. Foreign tourists, including Americans, are often targets of crime. The incidence of crime against tourists is greater in areas surrounding the airport, beaches, hotels, bars, nightclubs, and other establishments that cater to visitors. While the risk is greater at dusk and during the evening hours, street crime can occur both day and night, and even safer areas of cities are not immune. Expensive watches, high profile jewelry, and all electronic devices will immediately attract unwanted attention from criminals.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Recife has one of the highest per capita murder rates in all of Brazil.

According to the 2012 census, Recife had one of the largest concentrations of favelas (slums) in the country, behind Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and Salvador. Favelas became a de-facto safe haven for various criminal elements. Local government initiatives are transforming favelas through educational and arts programs, yet violent incidents continue to occur even in the more pacified favelas.

While kidnappings for ransom have become less common in recent years, these incidents continue to occur. One tactic of organized gangs is to target individuals observed withdrawing money from ATMs or exiting banks after making a withdrawal. These gangs frequently operate in teams and are armed.

A trend is called "ARRASTÃO" (dragnet) in which many criminals perform multiple robberies at the same time during congested traffic or on the beach. "Arrastões" and random robberies are expected to occur during big events such as Carnaval, soccer games, and during peak times at the beach.

There is significant and sustained organized criminal activity throughout Brazil, particularly in major cities. Organized criminal gangs target trucks and vans carrying finished goods, so they may steal and resell them on the black market.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Overall Road Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Road conditions range from very good to poor, especially on secondary and rural roads. Roads are mostly paved and generally in good condition. During heavy storms, roads are prone to flooding. Brazil has a very high level of vehicle accidents and death rates due to accidents. Drive with caution and always wear your seatbelt.

Brazil uses an automatic photo-ticketing system (*fiscalizaco eletrnica*) to discourage speeding, and tickets are mailed to the owner of the vehicle. Recife has a zero tolerance for drinking and driving (*Lei Seca*). Numerous and unannounced check points are typical. Consequences can vary from being arrested to a fine.

Avoid city buses and other public transportation; many pass through high crime areas and are susceptible to robberies. Only use legitimate, well-marked taxis.

Crime on the road remains a problem, especially during evening travel and traffic jams. Travelers are advised to use caution during evening travel to evade roadside robberies that target passing and stopped vehicles. It is important that drivers pay attention to their surroundings, and keep doors locked and windows rolled up when stopped in traffic. Individuals in vehicles stopped at traffic lights are also targets for *arrasto*. If you find yourself

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



in a carjacking situation, you should surrender your vehicle and offer no resistance. Do not allow yourself to be taken to another location by the assailant. Odds increase that you could be assaulted or killed.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

There are no known indigenous terrorist groups operating in Brazil. Brazil is a non-aligned country with no significant enemies and is not targeted by any known radical groups.

Civil Unrest

Political violence and protests occur throughout Brazil, especially in the capital and major cities. There have been protests in the past year throughout the country. Locals protest for various reasons: work conditions, wages, the environment, and political corruption. While protests are generally nonviolent, some have resulted in property damage and minor injuries. Protests tend to increase in number and intensity during the visits of high-profile foreigners.

Extremist groups, such as Movimento Sem Terra (MST), Black Bloc, and other domestic political groups with an extremist agenda, occasionally conduct acts of civil disobedience and

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



have confronted police violently. The threat of violence is always possible. While the majority of protests in Recife are peaceful, they can quickly become confrontational.

Religious or Ethnic Violence

The tri-border area, comprised of the border regions of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, is home to a large Arab community. To date, no incidents directed against official or non-official Americans have occurred in this area.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Significant flooding occurs during the rainy season. Flooding, and associated mudslides, are a seasonal problem in Recife.

Beachgoers should heed signs posted on beaches alerting to the higher-than-average probability of shark attacks. Shark attacks are recorded in Recife every year.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Regional Travel Concerns and Restricted Travel Areas/Zones

Tourists should take special care while on the beaches, as robberies may occur in broad daylight, especially in the upscale Boa Viagem neighborhood.

While the Embassy does not specifically discourage travel to the tri-border area, some anti-American sentiment has been expressed in the region. American visitors to the area, to include the Foz do Iguaçu waterfall, should remain vigilant and are encouraged to maintain a low profile.

Drug-related Crimes

The major cities experience the effects of persons addicted to illicit drugs. This includes criminal activity -- such as street assaults and robberies -- the proceeds of which are used to support their addictions. Brazil is the number two consumer of cocaine in the world, behind the United States. As such, a large proportion of crimes are drug-related.

Kidnapping Threats

Kidnapping for ransom, called 'sequestro relampago' or 'lightning kidnapping,' was a significant problem until several years ago. Assailants would target individuals for kidnapping due to perceived wealth and hold them captive until a ransom was paid. Assailants would also

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



attempt to take the maximum amount of money out of the victim's accounts by using their debit/credit cards until the cards were cancelled. This type of crime is now rare in Recife.

There has been no politically motivated kidnapping in Brazil since the era of military rule (1964-1988).

Police Response

Police response, both from the military and civil police, varies in Recife. Police officials frequently cite lack of resources, staffing shortages, basic equipment, and morale as reasons for widely varying response times and unsolved crime. Law enforcement entities continue to look for creative policing strategies to overcome infrastructure challenges to crime prevention, such as community policing, cops on motorcycles, and extensive implementation of surveillance cameras in the city.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Visitors should inform the nearest embassy or consulate in the event they encounter problems while traveling in Brazil, including detainment or arrest by the police.

American Citizen Services (ACS) - M-F, 7:00AM to 4:00PM, (+55) (81) 3416-3080

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



After hours Duty Officer emergency line - 4:00PM to 7:00AM and on weekends: (+55) (81) 9916-9470

Where to Turn to for Assistance if you Become a Victim of Crime

National Emergency Services

Recife Emergency Services

Phone #

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Medical Emergency (*Ambulância*)

192

Fire Service / Sea Rescue (*Corpo de Bombeiros*)

193

Military Police (*Polícia Militar*)

190

Civil Police (*Polícia Civil*)

197

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Federal Police (*Polícia Federal*)

194

Traffic Police - CTTU

0800-081-1078

Transit Department - DETRAN

154

Airport (Guararapes)

(81)3464-4188

Tourist Police Station (Delegacia do Turista)

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



(81)3322-3122

Medical Emergencies

Medical care at private clinics in Recife is considered to be quite good. Cash payment in advance, however, is normally required for medical care at private facilities. Public hospitals provide a lower standard of care and are often overcrowded and understaffed, but they generally do not require prepayment and are skilled at dealing with medical emergencies.

Contact Information for Recommended Local Hospitals and Clinics

The following private hospitals have been identified by the Consulate as suitable for use by visitors to Recife:

- Real Hospital Portugues de Beneficencia em Pernambuco at Avenida Governador Agamenon Magalhães, 4760, Paissandu, Recife; T: (81) 3416-1122
- Hospital Santa Joana at Rua Joaquim Nabuco, 200, Derby, Recife; T: (81) 3216-6565
- Hospital Esperança at Rua Antonio Gomes e Freitas, 265, Ilha do Leite; T: (81) 3131-7878

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



- Hospital Unimed Recife at Av. Lins Petit, Nº 35, Praça Chora Menino, Ilha do Leite, Recife; T: (81) 3231-3111

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

For air medical evacuation services, we recommend visitors purchase private air medical evacuation insurance before travelling to Brazil.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Travelers should consult with their medical providers regarding immunization and vaccination requirements prior to traveling to Brazil. Travelers should have a documented yellow fever card. For specific vaccination requirements and health guidance, please visit to CDC at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/brazil>.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Crimes/Scams

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



There are a variety of scams used by the criminals to rob victims, which include:

An unknown individual calls to say that a person you know, possibly a family member, has been kidnapped and unless you pay the ransom immediately the person will be harmed. The ransom is paid, and it becomes clear that the kidnapping never occurred.

A similar scam is where an unknown individual calls and states an employee or family member has been in an accident and needs immediate medical attention. The individual states that payment must be provided in order for the injured individual to be treated. This scam often targets household staff that react without verifying with their employer.

Areas to be Avoided

All favelas, especially those that do not have a round the clock police presence, should be avoided.

Best Situational Awareness Practices

Visitors to Brazil should practice common sense preventive security techniques. Do not carry or wear valuable items that will attract attention. If you need to wear expensive jewelry or carry a camera, conceal it until you arrive at your destination. The goal is to lower your profile and blend in. Do not walk on beaches or in parks after dark; assaults are common in these

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



areas. Be aware of the street environment and avoid contact with those who may be looking for potential victims. If you feel unsafe, seek a safer location at a store, bank, or simply cross the street. Be alert at open markets or crowded areas. Travel in groups of two or more persons. Do not physically resist any robbery attempt; while this is a personal decision, statistics show that resistance can lead to injury or death.

Do not answer your hotel room door until you positively confirm who is on the other side. Look out the peephole or call the front desk to confirm the visitor.

Consider renting or purchasing a cellular phone. Cellular phones are widely available, inexpensive, and generally reliable, especially in the major cities.

Using ATMs in inconspicuous locations or those in major tourist hotels greatly reduce the odds of being targeted for kidnap and ransom. Be careful of cash transactions on the street. A hurried transaction for merchandise often leaves the customer with shoddy/counterfeit goods or with counterfeit money. If using credit cards, never allow waiters or clerks to walk away with your card and make sure they only swipe your card once. Carefully monitor your accounts for the duration of the visit due to the possibility of having cards cloned or duplicated.

Do not accept drinks from strangers and always watch your drink. Scopolamine, or a similar drug, may be added to your drink. People have woken up robbed of their valuables or have been sexually assaulted after accepting such a drink.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Cargo theft has made many companies employ expensive countermeasures to reduce this type of loss, including armed security escorts for high value loads and the use of satellites to track truck movements.

All visitors should avoid large crowds or on-going protests. If you observe a large concentration of people, immediately depart the area.

U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information

Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

The U.S. Consulate Recife is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; except for Brazilian and American holidays.

Rua Gonçalves Maia, 163

Bairro Boa Vista

Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil

Consulate Contact Numbers

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Regional Security Officer (RSO): (+55) (81) 3416-3114

American Citizen Services (ACS): (+55) (81) 3416-3080

After hours Duty Officer: (+55) (81) 9916-9470

Emergencies and calls after normal business hours may be directed to Post One Brasilia: (+55) (61) 3312-7400.

U.S. companies are encouraged to contact the RSO in Recife for specific questions concerning the local security situation. Information is also readily available from the RSO offices in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, and Sao Paulo.

OSAC Country Council Information

Recife does not have an OSAC Country Council. OSAC Country Councils in Brazil are located in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Please review their reports for additional details. Country Council information can be located at the OSAC website at: www.osac.gov/countrycouncils.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.