



Travel Warning: Mauritania

Travel Health and Safety; Threats; Terrorism; Crime

Africa > Mauritania; Africa > Mauritania > Nouakchott

2/23/2016

The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to Mauritania, particularly the eastern regions, due to activities by terrorist groups including al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which are active in the neighboring regions of Mali. The ability of the U.S. Embassy to provide consular services in remote and rural areas of Mauritania is severely limited. This replaces the Travel Warning for Mauritania dated October 2014, to update U.S. citizens on the current security situation.

Kidnapping and other violent acts, including by terrorist groups, have occurred in the past in the border regions of Guidimagha, Hodh El Charghi and Hodh El Gharbi near the south-eastern border with Mali, the eastern half of the Assaba region (east of Kiffa), Tidjikja, the eastern half of the Tagant region (east of Tidjikja), the eastern half of the Adrar region (east of Ouadane), and the Zemmour region of northern Mauritania (other than F'Derick and Zouerat). Aside from the security risks, the remoteness and harsh environment of these areas present safety challenges as well. The government of Mauritania has designated most of this area as a restricted security zone. Entry into this region requires permission from the Mauritanian authorities.

AQIM and al-Murabitun terrorist organizations and affiliates have declared their intention to attack foreign targets in north and west Africa (particularly the Sahel region bordering the Sahara). In recent years, AQIM terrorist activity in Mauritania included kidnapping, murder, and attacks on foreign diplomatic missions and private citizens, gendarme military installations and personnel. Although not currently active in Mauritania, the threat of terrorism remains. Christian faith-based organizations operating in Mauritania, or individuals perceived to be proselytizing, may be targeted.

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U.S. Embassy personnel are restricted from traveling outside Nouakchott unless specifically authorized to do so, and then only during daylight hours. U.S. citizens should take these restrictions into account when planning travel.

U.S. citizens in Mauritania should be vigilant and aware of their surroundings at all times. They should maintain good personal security practices, including always locking their homes and cars, varying routes and times of travel. U.S. citizens should be particularly alert when frequenting locales associated with foreigners, including grocery stores, hotels, cultural centers, social and recreation clubs, beach areas, and restaurants. Additionally, U.S. citizens should avoid demonstrations and highly publicized events/venues with no visible security presence.

Landmines remain a danger along the border with the Western Sahara. Travelers should cross borders only at designated border posts.

For further information:

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Mauritania Country Specific Information.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Contact the U.S. Embassy Nouakchott located between the presidency building and the Spanish Embassy on Rue Abdallaye B. P. 222, Nouakchott, at (222) 4525-2660, 4525-1145, or 4525-3038 8:00a.m – 5:00p.m. Monday – Thursday, and 8:00am – 12:00pm on Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is (222) 4525-3288.

Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

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