



Travel Alert: Tunisia

Terrorism

Near East > Tunisia > Tunis

2/29/2016

The U.S. Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the risks of travel to Tunisia and recommends that U.S. citizens in Tunisia maintain a high level of vigilance following the February 19 U.S. airstrike targeting a Tunisian terrorist facilitator at a terrorist training camp in Libya near the Tunisian border. The Tunisian government has visibly augmented its security presence in recent months, but challenges persist. This travel alert expires on March 31, 2016.

U.S. citizens should exercise extreme caution in Tunisia when frequenting public venues visited by large numbers of foreigners, such as: hotels, shopping centers, tourist sites, and restaurants. Two attacks in 2015 targeted tourists: the Bardo Museum in Tunis on March 18 and two beach hotels near Sousse on June 26. ISIL claimed responsibility for both attacks. U.S. citizens should also be alert in general to the possibility of kidnapping.

Terrorist organizations have also increasingly targeted Tunisian security forces and government installations. Most recently on November 24, 2015, a suicide bomber struck a bus carrying Tunisian Presidential Guard personnel on Avenue Mohammed V in central Tunis, killing 12 security personnel. ISIL has claimed responsibility for the attack. The Tunisian government officially designated the group Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AAS-T), a group with known anti-U.S. and anti-Western sentiments, as a terrorist organization on August 27, 2013. The Tunisian government continues security force operations against AAS-T, ISIL, and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

On November 24, 2015, President Beji Caid Essebsi declared a 30-day state of emergency, which was most recently extended through March 22, which grants security forces more authority to maintain civil order, enabling the government to focus on combatting terrorism. The Minister of Interior has stated that the state of emergency also assists in securing hotels and tourist areas.

Protests, demonstrations, and civil unrest can occur with little warning throughout the country. U.S. citizens should avoid large crowds and demonstrations, as even demonstrations that are

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.



meant to be peaceful have the potential to become unpredictable. When the last significant protests took place in Tunisia in January, they were not directed against U.S. citizens or foreigners. U.S. citizens should also be alert and aware of their surroundings. Travelers should monitor local events, report suspicious activity to the local police, and take appropriate steps to bolster personal security.

Travelers contemplating trips to the interior of the country should assess local conditions and routes when making travel plans. In particular, all travel south of the designated military zone in the south must be coordinated in advance with Tunisian authorities. Also, travel to either border should be avoided, if possible, given the periodic security incidents along the border regions, including the Mount Chaambi region near the Algerian border where security operations continue against armed extremists. The Tunisian National Guard encourages persons traveling into the desert to register their travel beforehand. For details on how and where to register, please visit the U.S. Embassy's desert travel page. No special authorization is required to travel to the desert as far south as Remada. The desert south of Remada is designated as a military zone by the Government of Tunisia. If travelers wish to enter the military zone, for example to travel to Borma, a special authorization is required. Tunisia shares borders with Algeria and Libya. Developments in Libya continue to affect the security situation along the border areas, and the Department of State warns U.S. citizens against all travel to Libya. Due to tighter security, backups of several hours can occur on the Tunisian side of the border. The Ras Jedir and Dehiba border crossings with Libya may be closed occasionally, and access to both crossings is strictly controlled by Tunisian security forces. Travelers should consult local authorities before travelling to the Libyan border, and should read the Department of State's Travel Warning for Libya, as well as the Department of State's Country Specific Information and other international travel safety and security information for Libya and Algeria. Travelers should consult local authorities before travelling to the Algerian border and read the Department of State's Travel Warning for Algeria. Some crossings may be closed occasionally and access is strictly controlled by Tunisian and Algerian security forces.

Government security forces, including the army, police, and National Guard, are visibly present throughout Tunisia. Under the state of emergency, the Ministry of Interior is granted broad powers and may ban rallies and demonstrations. The Minister of Interior, as well as local governors, have the prerogative to put any individual under house arrest, if considered a threat to national and public security; and to search houses and conduct other activities without requiring prior judicial authorization. Security personnel, including plain clothes

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.



officials, may at times place foreign visitors under surveillance. It is against Tunisian law to photograph government offices and other security facilities. Suspicious incidents or problems should be reported immediately to Tunisian authorities and the U.S. Embassy. Travelers should remain alert to local security developments and heed directions given by uniformed security officials. U.S. citizens are urged to always carry a copy of their passport as proof of nationality and identity and, if moving about alone, a cell phone or other means of communication that works in Tunisia.

The U.S. government considers the potential threat to U.S. Embassy personnel assigned abroad sufficiently serious to require them to live and work under security restrictions which vary by country of assignment. Embassy Tunis travel regulations require advance notification to Embassy security officials of travel outside greater Tunis. These measures occasionally prevent the movement of U.S. Embassy officials and the provision of consular services in certain areas of the country.

Although these restrictions do not apply to travelers not associated with the U.S. government, U.S. citizens in Tunisia should take these restrictions into account when planning travel. The Embassy regularly reviews the security of these areas for possible modification. Travelers should keep informed of local developments by following local press, radio, and television reports prior to their visits. Visitors should also consult their hosts, including U.S. and Tunisian business contacts, hotels, tour guides, and travel organizers.

Unless otherwise indicated in a public announcement, the U.S. Embassy is open for all routine American Citizens Services by appointment. U.S. citizens needing emergency assistance do not need an appointment. The Embassy will notify U.S. citizens as quickly as possible of any closing and the types of emergency consular services that will be available. Visit the Embassy website to check the latest changes to Embassy hours or services. For further information:

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

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (**STEP**) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

Contact the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia located at North East Zone Berges du Lac, North of Tunis 2045 La Goulette, at +216 71 107 000, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is +216 71 107 000.

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.



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).

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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.