



Jordan 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Murder; Assault; Kidnapping; Counterfeiting; Academia; Rape/Sexual Violence; Burglary; Cyber; Improvised Explosive Device; Religious Terrorism; Anti-American sentiment; Riots/Civil Unrest; Earthquakes; Extreme heat/drought; Floods; Winter weather; Hate Crimes; Faith-based Organization; Drug Trafficking

Near East > Jordan; Near East > Jordan > Amman

3/3/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

Although overall crime levels in Jordan remain relatively low, the economy, regional events, and the cost of essential commodities have served as potential catalysts for an increase in crime. Jordan's population is approximately 8.1 million.

Crime Threats

Amman's RSO continues to track an increasing trend in crime. At the time of this report, the Public Security Directorate's (PSD) Criminal Information Department had not released official crime statistics for 2015. In light of this, official 2014 statics are provided for context. PSD reported 26,804 crimes in Jordan in 2014; this is in line with the five-year average. Crimes

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against persons, public administration, and public safety were at five-year highs, well above reported incidents from 2010-2013. Official reports also note that attempted murder (565 incidents), murder (90 incidents), aggravated assaults (1,086 incidents), and kidnapping (181 incidents) were also at five-year highs in 2014. Attempted theft, criminal theft, auto theft, and currency counterfeiting were below average, but public administration bribery and firearm discharges were at five-year highs in 2014.

Violence at universities continues to be problematic, as many assaults taking place at universities involved weapons.

In 2015, the U.S. Embassy received an increased number of sexual harassment reports, including inappropriate physical contact, stalking, and indecent exposure. There were six reported incidents involving sexual assaults directed at or witnessed by Embassy personnel and dependents. Three incidents involved indecent exposure, and three incidents involved groping female employees/dependents. The Embassy also received reports of three rapes of U.S. citizen visitors. Two of the three alleged assailants were Jordanian, and two of the three incidents involved the use of force; the other was facilitated by a date rape drug. Many sexual harassment/assault incidents affecting Westerners involve taxi drivers inappropriately touching female passengers riding in the front seat.

Vehicle theft and vehicle break-ins are also concerning. In 2015, the RSO received several reports of crimes involving vehicles, including two break-ins of vehicles owned by Embassy employees.

In 2015, the U.S. Embassy received several reports of thefts and break-ins at diplomatic residences. Incidents ranged from full-scale burglaries to minor incidents (theft of patio

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furniture, plants, propane tanks, diesel fuel). These incidents -- particularly propane and diesel fuel theft -- can be significant issues for the American expatriate community.

The most common crimes directed against Americans and other Westerners are petty in nature, especially in crowded areas and at tourist sites.

Below is a sampling of criminal acts between January-March 2015. It is not inclusive of all events. Furthermore, the events are not exclusive to crimes involving U.S. citizens.

In January 2015, a suspect was arrested for sexually harassing a U.S. Embassy employee while she rode in a taxi from Queen Alia Airport to Amman. Also in January, a private U.S. citizen reported that three assailants used a firearm and two knives during an attempted robbery in Amman.

In February 2015, two private U.S. citizens were injured during an attempted robbery in Amman. One of the U.S. citizens was taken to the hospital for stab wounds. Also in February, a private U.S. citizen notified the Embassy that she was receiving death threats. An official police report and subsequent investigation followed. Additionally, security officials arrested a Jordanian citizen in Madaba for burglary. Upon departing the suspect's residence, police were ambushed by assailants attempting to free the suspect. One police officer was injured, and one assailant was shot and killed.

In March 2015, five suspects were arrested in Amman for orchestrating residential burglaries. Security officials confiscated stolen property and three automatic weapons. Also in March, security officials attempted to arrest several individuals involved in home invasions in Amman. Security personnel and the suspects engaged in a shootout before the suspects' arrests. Additionally, a Jordanian was arrested in Ma'an for 30 outstanding warrants; an AK-47 and drugs were seized. Finally, a private U.S. student was robbed at knifepoint in Madaba.

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Firearm possession, transport, and sales remained a serious concern in 2015. From January-March 2015, the following notable incidents occurred in Jordan.

In January 2015, Jordanian security officials at the Syrian border disabled a vehicle attempting to smuggle 1,464 weapons into Jordan. In another January incident, the owner of a Saudi vehicle was arrested at the Dura border crossing for attempting to enter Jordan with 50 firearms concealed in the vehicle. Also, Jordanian security officials foiled an infiltration attempt by three armed men at the Syrian border.

In February 2015, security officials arrested two individuals in Zarqa for illegally possessing and attempting to sell 10 shotguns. Also in February, two individuals were shot and killed trying to illegal cross into Jordan from Syria.

In March 2015, a Jordanian was arrested in Zarqa for illegally selling weapons; three firearms were seized. Additionally, security officials arrested seven suspects in Amman for illegal weapons trade; 13 firearms were seized.

This three-month sampling illustrates the prevalence and intent of illicit arms dealers.

Criminal activity continues to affect one's work and life in the community. Although criminal events are less prevalent in Western Amman, crime remains a concern for the RSO.

Cybersecurity Issues

Similar to 2014, 2015 witnessed a continued trend of Internet scams, primarily using fictitious social media accounts purporting to be current or former U.S. government officials. These

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incidents have included fictitious LinkedIn accounts, Facebook posts, and use of other cyber platforms.

Other Areas of Concern

Due to ongoing conflicts in the region, anti-ISIL Coalition activity, and border security concerns, the U.S. Embassy maintains a strict travel policy for all personnel under Chief of Mission authority. The policy mandates specific restrictions and requirements for official travel in close proximity to the Syrian and Iraqi borders and travel to refugee camps. Embassy travel to these locations must be in armored vehicles equipped with tracking devices. Prior to travel, the RSO consults with Jordanian security officials to ascertain hazards, and, if necessary, the RSO arranges additional security measures.

Celebratory gunfire, especially during weddings, funerals, and the release of academic results, is a concern. Additional issues include altercations between tribes and marrying families, as well as honor killings and retaliatory attacks.

Although confined to northern areas, explosive ordnance (indirect or otherwise) landed in Jordan on several occasions in 2015. The likely point of origin for the ordnance was Syria. The RSO continues to monitor these events as a significant concern.

The targeting of law enforcement and security personnel remained a concern in 2015. There were several attacks on Jordanian security personnel, including ambushes of police vehicles

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and attacks on security facilities and officers. In 2015, the security services had at least six security officers killed as a result of targeted attacks.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Physical road conditions in urban environments are generally good. In contrast, driving conditions in rural areas can be hazardous, as roads are less developed. The RSO strongly discourages individuals from driving outside Greater Amman at night, as poor lighting compounds driving hazards (unmarked traffic patterns, livestock crossing, non-traditional (i.e. erratic) driving).

Traffic accidents are common and often result in serious injuries or fatalities. Fatality rates are significantly higher than in the U.S. Excessive speeding and failure to obey traffic regulations are common. Motorists should drive defensively and use extreme caution; seatbelts should be worn at all times. In 2015, the RSO responded to 86 reports of traffic accidents involving American diplomats or their dependents. Most accidents are minor and are resolved at the scene, although some parties may escalate tensions and demand immediate compensation.

Personnel are encouraged to lock their vehicle doors and avoid leaving valuables in plain view.

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Public Transportation Conditions

U.S. citizens are encouraged to use licensed, commercial taxis, available at most major hotels. Passengers should insist that the driver does not pick up additional passengers. Women are encouraged to take reasonable precautions, to include riding in the back seat of taxis, dressing modestly, carrying a charged cell phone, and avoiding travel to unfamiliar areas, especially at night. To decrease the likelihood of becoming a victim, the RSO recommends exercising common sense precautions applicable to any large urban environment.

Other forms of public ground transportation are not recommended.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Queen Alia International Airport (AMM) is approximately 15 miles (25 kilometers) south of downtown Amman; the drive takes approximately 30-45 minutes. King Hussein International Airport (AQJ) is close to Aqaba. King Hussein International Airport is 75 miles (280 kilometers) south of Amman; the drive takes approximately four hours. The airports adhere to international air safety standards. Security at Queen Alia International Airport and King Hussein International Airport is controlled by Jordanian security agencies. In light of regional events, to include, but not limited to, the downing of Flight 9268 in the Sinai, security has been enhanced at Queen Alia Airport, to include secondary screening at the point of departure with enhanced screening for direct flights to the U.S.

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Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: High

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

The threat of terrorism remains a major concern. Local, regional, and transnational terrorist groups and extremists have demonstrated the willingness and capacity to plan and execute attacks in Jordan. Jordan remains a key ally in combating terrorism and extremist ideology. Jordanian security services participate in coalition military operations and continue to bolster defenses against terrorist incursions on their borders. Jordan continues to host U.S. military personnel, for anti-ISIL operations, joint exercises, and training. Jordan has shown itself a willing and capable partner in the fight against terrorists. Nevertheless, specifically-direct plots have manifested throughout 2015.

In 2015, the Jordanian State Security Court (SSC) took legal action against numerous individuals deemed to be terrorists, including the arrest and prosecution of men accused of seeking to join al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Other arrests and prosecutions involved supporting/recruiting for ISIL and attempted travel to/from Syria in support of extremist activities.

In July 2015, authorities arrested an individual with 45kg of explosives. Jordanian officials

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charged him with plotting to attack a Jordanian military installation.

In November 2015, a police officer killed several U.S. citizen trainers in a shooting at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC). The assailant also killed a South African trainer and two Jordanian interpreters who were working with the U.S. trainers.

In December 2015, the SSC sentenced three defendants to 10 years in prison for planning to attack a General Intelligence Directorate (GID) building in Ar Rusayfah with explosives and a plot to kill Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF) pilots. Jordanian officials believed the three were ISIL supporters.

Throughout 2015, security officials continued to arrest ISIL supporters, many for posting pro-ISIL videos/statements on social media sites. The government charged them before the SSC for using the Internet to propagate terrorist ideology.

Below is a sampling of security incidents/arrests over the past 15 years. While not inclusive of all plots, arrests, and incidents, it provides background information regarding the intent and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) of hostile actors.

In 2002, U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley was assassinated in the driveway of his Amman residence.

In 2005, al-Qa'ida (AQ) claimed responsibility for the bombings of three international hotels in Amman that resulted in 60 fatalities. AQ claimed responsibility for rocket attacks in Aqaba that killed one Jordanian soldier and wounded another. In 2005, 17 AQ affiliates were arrested for planning to assassinate Jordanian and Americans officials.

From 2006-2008, security officials arrested numerous terrorism suspects while disrupting several terrorist plots. Despite the proactive work of security and intelligence services, a gunman opened fire on a group of tourists in central Amman, wounding six before turning the gun on himself. Additionally, a gunman opened fire on foreigners at a popular tourist site in

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Al-Hashimiyah Square in Amman, killing one and injuring six.

In 2010, in separate incidents, roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) targeted a U.S. vehicle and an Israeli vehicle. One IED detonated near the passing vehicle of three State Department contractors in Sahab. The attack caused minor damage to the vehicle but resulted in no injuries. In another incident, an IED detonated near an Israeli diplomatic motorcade on the Dead Sea Highway.

In 2012, security services disrupted a complex terrorist plot that targeted several Amman shopping centers and cafes frequented by diplomats and Westerners. The sophisticated plot, orchestrated by members of al-Qai'da in Iraq (AQI), was designed to take place in several phases, culminating in an attack on the U.S. Embassy. Authorities arrested 11 suspects.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

Terrorists often do not distinguish between official personnel and private citizens. Terrorists may target areas frequented by Westerners. Americans are encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. It is especially important for travelers to vary their times and routes to decrease predictability while maintaining a low profile. Protests in front of the U.S. Embassy were infrequent in 2015 and included no more than a couple dozen individuals, but the potential for an increase in frequency and intensity exists.

Anti-American/anti-Western sentiment is inflamed by regional issues. U.S. involvement in Iraq and Syria has fueled anti-American sentiment. In addition, ongoing military operations in the region are viewed unfavorably by certain segments of the Jordanian population. A 2015 Pew Research Center survey (based on 45,435 face-to-face and telephone interviews of adults in 40 countries from March 25-May 27, 2015) reported that 83 percent of surveyed Jordanians

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have an unfavorable view of the U.S.; this is significantly above the global median of 31 percent. In light of anti-American/anti-Western sentiment, the RSO encourages all Americans to maintain vigilance while implementing personal security measures.

Violence in the West Bank and Gaza has led to demonstrations and anti-government/anti-U.S. sentiment in Jordan

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Political violence has focused on Arab-Israeli relations, government subsidies, and the local grievances (access to water, government services)..

Post Political Violence Rating: High

Civil Unrest

There are frequent rallies, demonstrations, and protests, though the number of large, anti-government demonstrations has decreased in recent years. The majority of these events occur after Friday prayers. RSO estimates that there were approximately 500 of these events in 2015.

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Below is a sampling of political violence and tribal disputes between January-March 2015. It encapsulates many examples of political violence, but it is not all inclusive. Furthermore, the events are not exclusive to crimes involving U.S. citizens. The remainder of 2015 witnessed similar events.

Throughout 2015, protestors burned tires, destroyed vehicles, and clashed with gendarmerie forces to protest the government's forced removal of vendors from the streets of Amman. Additionally, protestors blocked the streets in Reba Sarhan using burning tires and rocks to protest on the death of a man by Jordanian security forces. Protesters also blocked the streets in Karak using burning tires to demand the release of Iraqi prisoner Sajeda Al Rishawi in exchange for ISIL hostage demands.

Jordan witnessed myriad other incidents in 2015. Protests regarding government policies, lost jobs, wages, and other perceived injustices continued to fuel demonstrations, albeit at a lower rate than past years. While most instances of political violence in 2015 were not directly related to U.S. interests, the potential for directed political violence remains high.

Demonstrations and protests sometimes escalate to violent/disorderly demonstrations, often resulting in road closures and confrontations with security forces. Specific tribal affiliations or student associations often exacerbate tensions and fuel unrest. However, permits are required for demonstrations, and security personnel monitor the events to ensure public order.

In addition to Palestinian refugees, most of whom are Jordanian citizens, the UNHCR reported that 635,035 Syrian refugees and 53,334 Iraqi refugees were registered in Jordan as of January 15, 2016. This influx has strained government resources, as the country confronts its own socio-economic challenges (unemployment, rising inflation, increased costs of basic

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necessities).

The RSO has tracked more than 5,500 demonstrations since the beginning of the Arab Spring, but other estimates place the figure as high as 10,000. The majority of demonstrations have been small, well-contained, and mostly non-violent.

Violence at universities remained a concern in 2015, as incidents were reported at Mutah University, Jordan University, Hashemite University, Yarmouk University, Isra University, and Zatouna University. Several disturbances were incited by disagreements stemming from university elections, tribal affiliations, and perceived grievances and injustices. In the first quarter of 2015, 27 students from Mutah University in Karak were arrested for an altercation arising from student affiliations and elections. In another university disturbance, a Jordanian citizen was stabbed following a tribal dispute at Mutah University in Karak.

Individuals should avoid large crowds and demonstrations, while taking measures to avoid areas where they are most likely to occur (city centers, universities, refugee camps), particularly during periods of increased tension.

Religious/Ethnic Violence

From January-March 2015, security forces intervened in numerous tribal disputes. As an example of the violence often associated with the disputes, one incident in Jabal Faysal-Russaifa resulted in six injuries, numerous arrests, and the seizure of an AK-47 assault rifle. Another incident involved a tribal dispute in Taybeh, in which one person was

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killed and two were injured. Additionally, six Jordanians were injured in a tribal dispute in Jerash, while a brawl in Irbid resulted in 12 arrests and several injuries.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

The region experiences regular seismic activity. The Jordan River Valley, which marks Jordan's western border, constitutes the northern section of the Great Rift Valley, which forms the tectonic border of the African and Asian plates. None of the recent small-scale seismic tremors have caused significant damage. Larger earthquakes have damaged many of Jordan's archeological sites. The last major earthquakes occurred in 1927 and 1936.

Jordan suffers from a lack of water, and drought is a recurring concern; the country may experience six months or greater without significant rainfall.

Flash floods do occur. In November 2015, a flashflood damaged vehicles, homes, and businesses while leaving motorists stranded on the streets of Amman. The flash floods resulted in widespread road closures and at least five reported fatalities.

In January 2015, over 2,000 people were rescued from their vehicles during a snow storm;

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dozens of accidents and injuries were reported, including several fatalities.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

Rolling power outages are infrequent but do occur, especially during extreme weather, when the demand for electricity exceeds the country's production capacity.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

Piracy of digital media and counterfeiting of computer software continues to be prevalent, despite efforts by the government to stem the flow of counterfeit products. Counterfeit currency has also been seized in numerous arrests, often seized in conjunction with illicit drugs and firearms. In the first quarter of 2015, security officials seized US\$75,000 in counterfeit currency and arrested two suspects in Irbid.

Personnel-Background Concerns

Gender plays a significant role in Jordanian society. One should be cognizant of gender-specific norms, and interactions should be appropriately considered to mitigate potential gender biases and cultural insensitivities.

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Jordan is tolerant of religious minorities but proselytizing is illegal. Two private U.S. citizens were deported in 2015 after allegations of proselytizing. Due to regional tensions, practitioners of certain faiths may experience increased scrutiny and unwelcomed attention.

Consensual same-sex conduct is not illegal; however, societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) persons was prevalent, and LGBTI persons were targets of abuse. Conservative cultural and religious norms restrict LGBTI persons from being open about their sexual orientation. Same-sex displays of affection in public may elicit severe reactions. In 2015, the RSO received several reports of LGBTI Jordanians being detained and interrogated by security officials. The RSO monitored some parliamentarians and public commentators who called for the arrest/expulsion of U.S. diplomats who publicly voice support for LGBTI rights.

While making strides to accommodate individuals with disabilities, Jordan does not adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Jordan does not have uniform mechanisms to accommodate persons with wheel chairs and other disabilities.

Drug-related Crimes

Jordan's geographical location between drug producing and drug consuming countries continues to make it a primary transit point for illicit drugs. Penalties for drug offenses are severe and considered crimes that threaten state security. Consular access for arrestees can be delayed pending investigation.

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In 2015, authorities seized over 50 million captagon pills, 212kg of heroin, 5,431kg of hashish, and 13,500kg of marijuana. Captagon (fenethylamine), heroin, hashish, and marijuana are predominant drugs in Jordan. The three-month sampling below highlights a few examples of narcotics seizures:

In February 2015, security officials arrested two individuals and confiscated seven kilograms of hashish in Mafraq. Additionally, security officials arrested 10 individuals, seized 342,000 captagon pills, 12kg of Hashish, and seven firearms during a security campaign. In a third incident, security officials arrested a drug smuggler after exchanging gun fire; approximately 200,000 captagon pills were seized, and one individual was arrested.

In March 2015, security officials arrested four suspects and seized 140 bags of hashish in Amman. Security officials also arrested five people in Ramtha for possessing counterfeit currency, one kilogram of marijuana, and two firearms. A third incident resulted in the seizure of 165,000 illegal narcotic pills.

Kidnapping Threat

The threat of kidnapping is a concern. There were no physical kidnapping attempts of U.S. citizens in 2015; however, American citizens were targeted in multiple kidnapping plots. In February 2015, the SSC sentenced two Syrian assailants to three years imprisonment for plotting to kidnap an American in Zarqa on behalf of Jabhat Al Nusra.

Police Response

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How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. citizens detained by authorities should immediately request that the American Citizen Services Section at the U.S. Embassy (962-6-590-6000 or 962-6-590-6500) be notified. The Embassy can provide a list of local attorneys, visit detainees, and contact family and friends. Jordanian authorities may treat Jordanian-Americans as Jordanian and not notify the Embassy promptly. In such cases, a family member should contact the Embassy on the detainee's behalf.

Crime Victim Assistance

Dial 911 for emergencies and life-threatening situations. If you are the victim of a crime, you should contact the U.S. Embassy Consular Section at 962 6 590-6000 for assistance. Please see <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/victims.html> for further information.

Police/Security Agencies

The Jordanian Public Security Directorate (PSD) is proactive and responsive when dealing with criminal activity. The PSD is the primary law enforcement entity that responds to emergencies. As such, the PSD is responsible for law enforcement, protection of visiting

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dignitaries, routine crime prevention, traffic control, locating missing persons, and protecting public venues. The PSD is headed by the Director General of Public Security who reports to the Minister of Interior.

The General Directorate of the Gendarmerie is primarily responsible for maintaining internal security, to include riot control and the protection of diplomatic missions. The Gendarmerie also supports other security agencies as needed.

The Directorate of Military Security (DMS) is subordinate to the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and is the military's primary security and counterintelligence element.

The General Intelligence Directorate (GID) is considered one of most important and professional intelligence agencies in the region.

Medical Emergencies

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Arab Medical Center, 5th Circle, Amman.

Emergency Room Tel: +962 (6) 592-1199 x750

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Ambulance Tel: +962 (6) 592-5801

Al-Khalidi Medical Center, 4th Circle, Amman.

Emergency Room and Ambulance Tel: +962 (6) 464-4281 x0

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

London SOS Air Ambulance

Tel: 00 44 20 8762 8008

Recommended Insurance Posture

All visitors are encouraged to have insurance coverage for hospitalization and medical evacuations.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

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For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/jordan?s_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-double-001.

OSAC Country Council Information

Information on OSAC activities in Amman and throughout Jordan may be found at <http://www.osac.gov/>. To reach OSAC's Near East team, please email OSACNEA@state.gov.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

The U.S. Embassy is located on Al-Umawiyeen Street, Abdoun District, Amman. The Embassy is open Sunday-Thursday from 0800-1700 hours.

Embassy Contact Numbers

Tel: 962 6 590-6000

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After-Hours Emergencies: 962 6 590-6500

Website: <http://jordan.usembassy.gov/>

Embassy Guidance

For additional information, please view <http://travel.state.gov> for the most recent public announcements on travel.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, which is available at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

For more information on international financial scams, please see <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/scams.html>.

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Situational Awareness Best Practices

American citizens should exercise caution, be alert, and stay informed of regional and local events that may impact the security environment. In general, Westerners are encouraged to travel in pairs or small groups. The RSO recommends that Americans maintain a low profile and not establish predictable patterns of movement. Additionally, U.S. citizens are encouraged to wear clothing that does not identify them as tourists or Westerners. Additionally, personnel are encouraged to remain vigilant when visiting areas where Americans or foreigners are likely to congregate (hotels, nightclubs, restaurants, tourist venues, places of worship).

Individuals are urged to increase their vigilance in areas where opportunistic thieves operate. When carrying a purse, wear it over one's neck and shoulder. Wallets and other valuables should be carried concealed and in front pockets – not in backpacks. Jordanian police continue to warn the public to exercise vigilance when leaving banks and ATMs.

The RSO encourages personal vigilance to protect against cyber solicitation, identity theft, and scams. The RSO reiterates that you should not send money to any person or business entity that you do not know personally.

Individuals should remain vigilant in protecting their personal information, banking records, and passwords.

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