



India 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Mumbai

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Information Security; Burglary; Extortion; Left-wing; Insurgencies; Religious Terrorism; Improvised Explosive Device; Riots/Civil Unrest; Floods; Rape/Sexual Violence; Hotels; Significant Events

South Central Asia > India; South Central Asia > India > Mumbai

3/15/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Medium

Crime Threats

For a city with more than 23 million people, Mumbai is generally safe for expatriates. Petty crime or crimes of opportunity have affected expatriates with reports of stolen bags, passports, and other valuables. However, most of these crimes occur in a non-confrontational manner, usually through stealth or forgetfulness of the victim. Areas frequented by foreigners are less vulnerable due to a generally adequate police presence.

Violent crimes do occur but are generally isolated in more high-density areas (slums, crowded apartment blocks).

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Residential theft is a common occurrence amongst the Indian population, normally occurring when the house or apartment is vacant; however, violence resulting in serious injury or death is relatively rare. Another common type of residential theft can involve household staff either stealing directly from their employer or allowing acquaintances into the residence while the employer is away.

There have been reports of Western companies being the subject of extortion threats by organized crime elements. The complexity and capability of organizations conducting organized white collar financial scams and cyber crime continue to expand. West African/Nigerian fraud rings are active in Mumbai and Goa. While these groups generally target lower income Indian citizens, it is not uncommon for the groups to use the names of actual U.S. diplomats, businesses, or businessmen in their fraudulent materials.

Other Areas of Concern

Travelers should avoid the Red Light district of Kamathipura.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

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One is more likely to be involved in a traffic accident than to be a victim of a crime, provided good personal security is practiced. Travel by road is dangerous and travelling at night is particularly hazardous. Roads in Mumbai are in moderate condition, but the city's infrastructure is not keeping pace with its rapid growth. There is extreme traffic congestion, which is reflected in the number of high-speed traffic accidents and fatalities. Officials report that approximately 72,000 accidents occur every year, resulting in an average of 14,000 deaths (figures are for the State of Maharashtra where Mumbai is located). In 2015, Mumbai experienced a spike in both serious and minor auto accidents compared to the previous years. The local media reports that an Indian dies every three minutes in a road accident in India. In general, most areas lack traffic law enforcement. Drivers routinely ignore traffic rules.

Outside major cities, main roads and arteries are often poorly maintained and congested. Even main roads frequently have only two lanes, with poor visibility and inadequate warning markers. On the few divided highways, one can expect to meet local transportation traveling in the wrong direction and often without lights. Heavy traffic is the norm and includes (but is not limited to) overloaded trucks/buses, scooters, pedestrians, bullock/camel carts, horse/elephant riders en route to weddings, bicycles, and free-roaming livestock.

Traffic moves on the left. It is important to be alert while crossing streets and intersections, especially after dark, as traffic is coming in the opposite directions from what Americans usually experience.

If a driver hits a pedestrian or a cow, the vehicle and its occupants could be attacked by passersby. Such attacks pose significant risk of injury/death to the vehicle's occupants or incineration of the vehicle. It can be unsafe to remain at the scene of an accident, and drivers

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should go directly to the nearest police station.

Travelers should remember to use seatbelts where available and to ask their drivers to maintain a safe speed.

To self-drive, expatriates must have either a valid Indian driver's license or a valid international driver's license. The safest driving policy for expatriates is to drive defensively and not assume that one can predict how other drivers will respond to a traffic situation. On the roads, "might makes right." For example, buses/trucks often run red lights and merge directly into traffic at yield points and traffic circles. Cars, auto-rickshaws, bicycles, and pedestrians behave only slightly more cautiously. Frequent use of one's horn or flashing of headlights to announce one's presence is customary. Because of difficult road and traffic conditions, many Americans choose to hire a local driver.

Public Transportation Conditions

Buses, patronized by millions of Indians, are convenient in that they serve almost every city in India. However, buses are usually driven without much consideration for the rules of the road. Accidents are quite common.

Trains are safer than buses, but train accidents still occur. Many of these accidents have been attributed to human negligence and have led to severe disruptions in railway traffic. Mumbai's Suburban Railway carries seven million passengers a day but not without risk. Trains are extremely overcrowded throughout the day, and exiting/entering the train can be dangerous

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or, in some cases, deadly. On average, there are 3,000 deaths related to the train system per year, though this includes people riding on the outside/top of the train and some pedestrians. Petty theft is common, and riders are advised to keep close watch of their belongings. Reports of harassment of women persist. Women are advised to travel in the female-only compartment.

It is advisable, particularly for women, to hire reliable cars and drivers and avoid traveling alone in hired taxis, especially between sunset and sunrise. If threatening situations are encountered, individuals should call 100 for police assistance.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Airlines are one of the safest modes of transportation. Most airports have a robust police presence, extensive CCTV coverage, and limit airport access to only employees and travelers. An adequate number of police officers are in proper uniform outside the Arrival Hall and parking area. In addition, plain-clothed officers also keep watch on suspicious activity.

Other Travel Conditions

Protestors often use road blockage as a means of publicizing their grievances, causing severe inconvenience to travelers. Visitors should monitor local news reports for any reports of road disturbances.

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Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: High

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

A disparate number of Maoist extremist groups called “Naxals” or “Naxalites” are active in parts of the Mumbai Consular District. They are particularly active in rural parts of the states of Chhattisgarh, extreme eastern Maharashtra, and in border regions of the states of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa. The Naxalites have a long history of conflict with state and national authorities, including frequent attacks on local police, paramilitary forces, and government officials. The Naxalites have not specifically targeted U.S. citizens but have attacked symbolic targets that have included Western companies. While Naxalite violence does not normally occur in places frequented by foreigners, there is a risk that visitors could become unintended victims. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, in 2014, 25 civilians, 55 security forces, and 33 LWE/CPI-Maoists were killed in Chhattisgarh. Likewise, 30 deaths were attributed to attacks by such extremists groups in attacks in Maharashtra.

Apart from the ongoing Maoist violence primarily in the Chhattisgarh region, there have been no major attacks on par with the 2008 events when members of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) targeted Mumbai, conducting a combined arms suicide operation that lasted three days and killed at least 173 people and wounded at least 308. The attackers stormed and bombed

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hotels, a Jewish center, a train station, a cafe, and a hospital during the attack.

A number of smaller, random attacks have occurred:

On July 11, 2006 terrorists linked to LeT detonated seven improvised explosive devices on Mumbai's Western Railway Line during the evening commute, killing 183 people.

In September 2006, three improvised explosive devices detonated in a market area of Malegaon (approximately 300km northeast of Mumbai).

The 2011 Mumbai bombings (often referred to as 13 July or 13/7) were a series of three coordinated bomb explosions at locations in Mumbai, on July 13, 2011. The blasts occurred at the Opera House, Zaveri Bazaar, and Dadar West, leaving 26 people killed and 130 injured.

On August 1, 2012, five roadside bombs were discovered in Pune, Maharashtra. Only four of the bombs exploded, causing injuries. No one has been prosecuted, but to date police have arrested eight suspected members of the Indian Mujahedeen on suspicion of having planted the bombs.

U.S. citizens should exercise vigilance when in the vicinity of government installations, visiting tourist sites, or attending public events. People should be aware of their surroundings and be alert for unattended bags or packages in these areas.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Political groups (Shiv Sena, which is a rightist political party based on Hindu nationalism) occasionally resort to political violence to make a point or protest labor issues.

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Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

Mumbai has a history of large demonstrations. The police handle large demonstrations professionally when they have advanced notice and can adequately plan for the event.

The city also experiences spontaneous demonstrations and incidents of violence that can disrupt traffic flow and cause damage to property before the police can respond. The police are quick to disrupt such protests. This interference can end in violent clashes between police and protestors, resulting in injuries and sometimes death.

Post-Specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Flooding during the monsoon season (June-September) is of great concern. During July-August 2005, more than 1,000 people died during the unprecedented flooding that occurred in the city. Flooding is exacerbated by inadequate drainage, clogged storm sewers,

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and expansive city growth. The worst flooding happens when a high-volume storm coincides with a high tide, as there is no outlet for the rain.

Personnel-Background Concerns

In the last few years, female U.S. citizens have been attacked by local youths at large public celebrations like New Year's. U.S. citizens, particularly women, are cautioned not to travel alone. Western women continue to report incidents of physical harassment by groups of men. According to the latest figures by Indian authorities, rape is the fastest growing crime in India. Although most victims have been local residents, recent sexual attacks against female visitors in tourist areas underline the fact that foreign women are also at risk and should exercise vigilance.

Drug-related Crimes

Indian law prescribes severe penalties for drug-related crimes, which apply to both citizens and foreigners alike.

Police Response

Mumbai police are short staffed, lack training, and are overworked, but they seem to do a reasonable job in securing the city. Police response is fair. The police are responsive to

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security requests. Further information on the Mumbai police can be found at <https://mumbai.police.maharashtra.gov.in>.

Refrain from taking pictures of Indian government facilities, train stations, airports, power plants, or other key sites receiving protection from the government of India. For more information, please review OSAC's Report "Picture This: Dos and Don'ts for Photography."

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

If you have been detained by the police, please contact the Consulate's American Citizens Services Unit (Tel: +91 (22) 2672-4000 extension 4374 or 4398 workdays or via email at mumbaiacs@state.gov). After hours and on holidays and weekends, call +91 (22) 2672-4000 and ask for the "Duty Officer."

Crime Victim Assistance

U.S. citizens needing immediate police assistance should call the police helpline (Tel: 100).

Medical Emergencies

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Emergency medical services in Mumbai are extremely limited. Ambulances are poorly equipped, and traffic congestion could prevent speedy transport to a hospital. Trauma victims are often transported by public transportation. Emergency medicine/trauma care is below Western standards, but steps are being made to improve this capability.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Mumbai hospitals and ambulance listing can be found at the following website:
<http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov/medical-information.html>

Available Air Ambulance Services

International SOS has a Mumbai office (Tel: +91-22-4068-3000) and a 24-hour Alarm Center (Tel: +91-11-4189-8800). International SOS Asia-Pacific website:
http://www.internationalsos.com/en/asiapacificregion_india.htm

Private air ambulance service in Mumbai is also provided by Indian Aero-Medical Services Private Ltd. Local contact numbers are +91-98-2004-3432, +91-98-2102-1255, or +91-98-2132-7232.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

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Local press reports indicate an extraordinarily high HIV rate among local sex workers.

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

OSAC Country Council Information

For information on the Mumbai OSAC Country Council, please contact the Regional Security Office at +91(22)2672-4000 ext 4911, visit the Chapter's Website at <http://mumbai.osac.gov/>, or send an email to mumbaiosac@state.gov.

To reach OSAC's South and Central Asia team, please email OSACSCA@state.gov.

U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information

Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

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The Consulate is located in the industrial park section of Mumbai known as Bandra Kurla Complex. The address is C-49, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai 400 051. Taxi drivers may also know the area for the Trident Hotel or American School of Bombay.

Consulate Contact Numbers

If you are calling from within India, but outside Mumbai, first dial 022.

Switchboard: +91(22)2672-4000

In case of an emergency involving an American citizen, please call the 24-hour operator at (91-22) 2672-4000 and ask for American Citizens Services.

Regional Security Office: ext 4911

The Consular Section (MumbaiACS@state.gov), Political/Economic Section, and the Consulate Duty Officer can be contacted through the main consulate telephone number.

Fax: +91(22)2672-4755

Website: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>

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Nearby Posts

Embassy New Delhi: <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/>

Consulate Chennai: <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Hyderabad: <http://hyderabad.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Kolkata: <http://kolkata.usconsulate.gov/>

Virtual Presence Post Bangalore: <http://bangalore.usvpp.gov/>

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Travelers should take standard security precautions when visiting Mumbai. Caution should be taken when in high poverty areas of the city. Travelers should exercise caution around large public celebrations like New Year's celebrations in Mumbai. Travelers should avoid any areas with large crowds, as they can quickly become violent or dangerous.

All expatriates are encouraged to observe stringent security precautions, including avoiding using public transport after dark without the company of known and trustworthy companions;

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restricting evening entertainment to well-known venues; and avoiding walking in isolated areas alone.

Visitors should ensure their hotel room numbers remain confidential and insist the doors of their hotel rooms have chains, deadlocks, and spy-holes.

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