



Burma 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Surveillance; Nationalist; Theft; Hotels; Fraud; Financial Security; Information Security; Bribery; Religious Violence; Floods; Separatist violence; Elections; Riots/Civil Unrest; Hurricanes; Employee Health Safety; Oil & Energy; Drug Trafficking; Disease Outbreak

East Asia & Pacific > Burma; East Asia & Pacific > Burma > Rangoon

4/12/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Burma represents an unprecedented opportunity for U.S. private-sector organizations seeking to enter an emerging, and potentially lucrative, market that had been almost entirely off-limits for decades. According to the International Monetary Fund, multilateral development banks, and other private-sector research reports, Burma has the potential to become the next economic frontier in Asia if it can take advantage of its abundant natural resources, young labor force, and geopolitical proximity to some of the most dynamic economies in the world. The long-term stability and viability of foreign investment, however, hinges on reform efforts, national reconciliation, and an end to violent expression of Burma's decades-old identity conflict.

Post Crime Rating: Low

Crime Threats

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Although the police do not issue crime or arrest statistics, endemic poverty, skyrocketing living costs, stagnant salaries, an increasing expatriate presence, and a rapidly expanding tourism sector have led to a perceived increase in crime. In Rangoon, Burmese nationals experience nighttime robberies, petty street crime, and home invasions.

While foreigners may be viewed as wealthy, there continues to be a perception that crimes against Americans and other Westerners are investigated more thoroughly and punished more rigorously. This belief has been reinforced with the government's establishment of a "Tourist Police" unit in 2013, a decision in January 2015 to reinforce and strengthen that unit, and the installation of billboards directing nationals to "warmly welcome" foreigners and "take care" of them. The most commonly reported crimes among diplomats and other expatriates are non-violent crimes of opportunity (pickpocketing, theft of unattended possessions in public places and hotel rooms, bag snatching, gems/confidence scams). In 2015, U.S. Embassy personnel reported one attempted residential burglary. However, many crimes reported to RSO are unverifiable due to third-party sources that are difficult to corroborate.

Incidents of financial fraud and identity theft crimes are increasing. Burma is a cash-only society with a few exceptions (though this is changing as more commercial hotel and restaurant outlets catering to tourists are beginning to accept credit cards).

Violent crime and the use of weapons in the commission of crime are not common.

According to Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index, Burma moved from 156 in 2014 to 147 in 2015. Despite Burma's dramatic improvement in the last three

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years (moving from 172 to 147), corruption is a serious barrier to investment and commerce and permeates every level of government and economy. U.S. companies may find competitors are able to obtain an advantage when proposing or bidding on projects, although the government has taken clear steps to improve the transparency and evaluation of major tenders as well as to tackle official corruption. However, U.S. companies generally find that government officials and businesspeople are much less likely to seek or expect facilitation payments or other gifts from them than are counterparts in other Southeast Asian countries.

U.S. firms consider the lack of clarity surrounding commercial laws and regulations and the lack of adequate infrastructure, including access to reliable electricity, to be the most serious impediments to doing business. U.S. organizations may find it difficult to carry out due diligence on potential business partners and employees, thereby complicating transparency efforts. Individuals on the Specifically Designated Nationals (SDN) list will often hide ownership and will sometimes name proxies (maids, drivers, other domestic employees) corporate documents to hide their affiliations. Furthermore, falsified documents can be purchased easily, often directly from personnel within the issuing agency, making it almost impossible to verify the accuracy of a background check or other due diligence-related investigations.

The absence of rule of law is an impediment for U.S. private sector organizations. The Burmese judicial system is archaic, and decisions are often made through personal relationships or bribes. The country suffers from an antiquated legal system and outdated legislation; many laws are vague and often subject to manipulation. According to the World Bank Doing Business 2014 report, Burma ranked last (189) for starting a new business, second to last (188) for enforcing contracts, and 182 for protecting investors. However, the country has since introduced reforms, including a decision in 2014 to reduce the corporate income tax rate. The 2016 iteration of the Doing Business report reflects modest improvement in some categories.

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Areas of Concern

There are no “off-limits” areas, prohibited establishments, or curfews in Rangoon. U.S. Embassy personnel are prohibited from driving outside of Rangoon during the hours of darkness. However, internal ethnic conflicts, communal violence, and religious tensions make certain areas of Burma off-limits. Permission to visit must be obtained from the government prior to travel to sensitive zones. Foreigners travelling overland outside of Rangoon or other major cities or tourist destinations may experience problems without a Burmese interpreter to facilitate interactions with non-English speakers.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Although major thoroughfares (Rangoon-Mandalay highway) are receiving attention from the government and some safety improvements are being made by the international community, many roads are unreliable or may become impassable after heavy rains. Many roads are unpaved, are not illuminated, lack shoulders, or are poorly graded. As a result of motorists speeding under these hazardous conditions, highway fatalities are on the rise.

Vehicle import restrictions have been lifted, and taxes/duties have been eased, more than doubling the number of vehicles on Rangoon’s streets in recent years. Many motorists are

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new to driving. This, combined Rangoon's narrow streets, congested (vehicles, pedestrians, animals), and poorly maintained roads, can make daily commutes difficult. Drivers are often impatient and exhibit little consideration for pedestrians, other motorist's right-of-way, and general safe driving practices.

Pedestrians tend to walk on/in the middle of roads or stand on painted lane dividers often only inches from passing vehicles, seemingly unaware of the potential safety hazard. Many pedestrians wear dark clothing, and local driver tendencies to use high beams at night (or no headlights at all), all of which pose additions driving risks.

By law, no alcohol is permitted in the system while operating a vehicle. Nonetheless, drunk driving is a major concern and poses a significant risk to visitors at night.

Outside of Rangoon, drivers also have to contend with ubiquitous motorbikes.

Traffic police are often inefficient, and enforcement of traffic regulations is haphazard and/or a means to solicit bribes. Police will often signal motorists to pull over for a "donation" or "tea money."

When traveling in a vehicle, keep your doors locked and windows secured. Keep valuable items out of sight. Always keep adequate space between yourself and the vehicle in front of you to ensure you can maneuver in the event of a situation requiring escape from the area. Be aware of what is taking place outside of the vehicle. Motorists should always attempt to park in secure, well-lighted locations. Do not hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers. Practice good

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operational security if you are transporting valuable items. According to police sources, some robberies committed against expatriates appear to have been carried out by persons with inside information regarding the victims.

Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation (taxis, bus, rail) is readily available in Rangoon and some parts of the country. Most trains and buses are overcrowded, are frequently out of service due to poor maintenance, are old, and often break down during long journeys.

In Rangoon, taxis are a more reliable method of transportation. They are generally considered safe, but many are poorly maintained, and some lack seatbelts. To avoid confrontation or fleeing, rates should be negotiated with the driver prior to embarkation.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has not assessed Burma's compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization safety standards. The safety records of Burma's commercial air carriers are not readily available, but anecdotal evidence (years of international sanctions and inability to import replacement aircraft parts) suggests that they are sub-standard. There is also no information available regarding the government's oversight of commercial aviation.

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Other Travel Conditions

During the rainy season (May-October), mud, deep puddles, flooding, glare from oncoming headlights, and near-zero visibility present an even greater challenge for travelers. Depending upon the destination, several hours of travel time may be added to a trip. Fuel stations and police assistance are limited outside of Rangoon and other major cities and large towns, so motorists should plan accordingly.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

The government is sensitive to the threat of terrorism and is engaged with international partners. There is no evidence to suggest that terrorist organizations have operational capacity in Burma or are actively targeting Western interests there. Although an American citizen was injured in the Traders Hotel (now the Shangri-La Hotel) bombing in October 2013, this individual was not the intended target. The government is not a state sponsor of terrorist activities and does not permit foreign fighters to transit the country. Money laundering, although present to facilitate other criminal activities, is not used to support terrorist

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activities/groups. Visitors should consider any large public gatherings could become attractive targets for terrorists.

During episodes of sectarian violence, there have been upticks in postings on jihadist websites with suggestions that Islamists fighters be sent to Burma to retaliate for attacks against the Muslims in Rakhine state. In September 2014, a video message released by al-Qa'ida's media arm announced the creation of a new branch of the organization in South Asia. In response to these potential threats, the government tightened security and took preventative measures at potential targets (Buddhist holy sites such as the Shwedagon Pagoda and the international airport in Rangoon). The Union of Myanmar hosted numerous, large public events in 2014, including the Pan-Asia Games and Association of South East Asia (ASEAN) summit, all without incident.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

Burma has a minority Muslim population with no history of anti-American sentiment or activity; in fact, most Muslim groups are decidedly pro-U.S. given the U.S. advocacy on their behalf in the face of discrimination by the Buddhist majority. There were no instances of political violence or terrorism directed against Americans in 2015. Intercommunal conflicts, public demonstrations, and outbursts of violence may challenge U.S. private sector organizations and could jeopardize U.S. investments and operations, even though U.S. entities may not be directly targeted.

While there is very little anti-American sentiment, visitors are cautioned to avoid any large crowds, demonstrations, political activity, and to maintain a good level of situational

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awareness.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Burma's defining challenge is how the country's diverse people can overcome a history of fractiousness in order to live together and hold the country together through political means rather than by force. Since its independence in 1948, Burma has been at war. This civil conflict is one of the world's longest and has involved every major ethnic group.

Since 2011, the government has signed cease-fire agreements with 14 ethnic armed groups. In November 2013 and January 2014, representatives from 17 ethnic armed groups—the largest gathering of ethnic leaders in more than 60 years—convened in Kachin and Karen states and collectively committed to negotiating a nationwide ceasefire and political dialogue framework with the government. On October 15, 2015, the government and eight ethnic armed groups signed the final version of a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA); however, several armed ethnic groups did not sign this new agreement and remain at war with the government. While progress is being made, sporadic clashes continue to occur.

Historical national elections were held November 2015 and the NLD won a landslide majority. No civil unrest or political violence broke out during the elections. Though the NLD won a landslide majority, per the Constitution, 25 percent of parliamentary seats will remain in the hands of the military. Newly-elected officials were scheduled to take their seats in February, and a new president and two vice presidents will be elected in March.

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Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

Burma has a history of violent responses to peaceful demonstrations. Such violent responses, coupled with endemic corruption, weak rule of law and governance challenges, widespread ethno-sectarian tensions, significant narcotics production and trafficking, privacy concerns, and infrastructure shortages make future unrest possible and add to the uncertainty U.S. private sector organizations are likely to face when attempting to enter the market.

Although public protests (often in response to incidents of gross human rights violation, land conflict, forced resettlement, education, or labor rights issues) and demonstrations are normally peaceful, spontaneous rioting may occur. There have been large, but peaceful, protests regarding the government's failure to deliver public services (electricity), as was the case in the summer of 2012. In 2015, after days of negotiations, police officers clashed with hundreds of students who had been protesting against a controversial education bill. In addition, there has also been an increase in small- to mid-size protests. The government has arrested protestors for contravening the Peaceful Assembly Act by protesting without permission.

Religious/Ethnic Violence

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Burma has over 135 officially-recognized, diverse ethnic groups, known as “national races.” While Burma’s ethnic diversity is a source of national pride, it has also led to a long, brutal history of violent ethnic and sectarian conflicts. Burma has 18 armies that represent the Kayin, Kachin, Shan, Mon, and Wa minorities, among others. Each of these groups controls areas along Burma’s borders, and, according to some sources, ethnic insurgents total 100,000 fighters. Some ethnic minority insurgents are involved in mining, border trade, logging, and illicit activities (drug trafficking). Armed ethnic groups in border regions continue to engage in criminal activities, including narcotics production/trafficking, gem/timber smuggling, and human trafficking. According to some sources, the government considers enforcement of these illicit activities secondary to security and tacitly permits narcotics trafficking in border areas in exchange for cooperation from armed ethnic groups. However, what they all have in common is a deep suspicion of the central government and a desire to form a federal army in which ethnic minorities are represented equally with the Burmans who currently dominate the Union’s military (Tatmadaw).

Burma experiences periodic, low-order bombings. These bombings are often perpetrated by ethnic insurgent groups and are usually designed to intimidate or harass. In 2015, there were bombings in northern, western, and eastern Burma, and unexploded IEDs were discovered in Shan and Kachin states. These bombings caused casualties; however, the majority of bombings did not target a specific group or person.

Intercommunal tension also exists between Buddhist and Muslim populations, including an estimated one million Muslims (Rohingya) in Rakhine state. Many of Burma’s ethnic groups view this population as illegal immigrants. The government does not recognize Rohingya as a minority, and most are not considered Burmese citizens, so they are unable to obtain identification cards or travel documents. Muslims in Rakhine state face abuse, institutionalized discrimination, restrictions on freedom of movement, and often lack access to education, livelihoods, and basic services. As a result, many have fled via boat to Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia, most notably in 2015. Tensions between ethnic/religious communities in Rakhine state claimed dozens of lives in 2012 and resulted in the displacement of 140,000

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people and the destruction of thousands of homes/businesses. Between 2013 and 2014, an escalation in tensions between hardline Buddhists and the minority Muslim population resulted in violence, including in Rangoon and Mandalay. There were significantly fewer incidents in 2015 compared to previous years. Although tensions remain high, the landmark 2015 general elections did not give rise to intercommunal and general political violence.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

During the rainy season (May-October), street flooding is pervasive in southern cities without adequate drainage systems. Low-lying villages are susceptible, often causing food shortages and other health concerns. Rangoon lacks the drainage infrastructure to accommodate storm water runoff. As a result, low-lying parts of Rangoon and major vehicle thoroughfares suffer from flash flooding.

Burma is also prone to cyclones. Cyclone Nargis in May 2008 caused extensive flooding and damage in the Irrawaddy Delta region and led to thousands of deaths. In Rangoon, the cyclone severely damaged transportation, communication, and electrical systems. Cyclone Giri in October 2010 caused destruction and some deaths in Rakhine state.

In July 2015, exceptionally heavy rains caused widespread flooding and landslides in central and western Burma. As a result, President Thein Sein's office announced natural disaster

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zones in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Magway Region, and Rakhine state.

Major earthquake fault lines are present, and should be considered when developing potential contingency planning.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

The former military junta chronically mismanaged the economy and failed to invest in critical infrastructure projects, allowing the country's transit infrastructure, electrical grid, telecommunications network, and tourism facilities to fall into a state of disrepair. Burma's infrastructure is sub-par compared to regional neighbors and will require vast investment and years of work. An old, inadequate electrical power infrastructure is one of the biggest challenges, leading to frequent blackouts even in major urban centers, as growth in demand continues to outstrip growth in supply.

Similarly, Burma's telecommunications and Internet infrastructure is substandard and of limited availability outside of urban areas and large towns. An estimated 60 percent of the population has access to cell phones, and approximately only four percent have landlines, making telephonic communication somewhat difficult. In June 2013, the government awarded a tender for telecommunications licenses to two international companies: Telenor and Ooredoo. Their build-out of infrastructure has resulted in an expansion in, and improvement to, the quality of telecom services. Individuals and organizations should understand that they may not have access to cellular networks and should consider redundant/alternative forms of telecommunication.

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Privacy Concerns

Despite recent reforms, government interest in the activities of foreigners persists. In June 2012, President Thein Sein's office issued an order to create a committee to monitor the activities of foreigners. Visitors conducting sensitive political or commercial business should assume that their actions are being monitored, especially in public places. Because the government controls the country's telephone network and Internet providers, calls and emails can be intercepted. Depending upon the government's level of interest in a particular visitor, overt surveillance may be employed. American private sector organizations must be aware that the "no expectation of privacy" policy can make the discussion of proprietary information and sensitive information difficult.

Drug-related Crimes

Narcotics production and trafficking is not accompanied by widespread or brazen violence. Several ethnic groups in border regions are heavily involved in the manufacture/trafficking of narcotics. Some of these ethnic groups use the proceeds to engage in armed conflict with the government. Additionally, elements of the government's police and military are suspected of being involved, or at least complicit, in narcotics operations. Burma is second in the world for opium production, only behind Afghanistan. Methamphetamines are another major narcotic that is produced in Burma.

Police Response

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The police do not compare to a U.S. police force in terms of capability, responsiveness, or professionalism. The police suffer from limited resources and corruption. Police units are often under-funded, under-staffed, and poorly equipped/trained. Most crimes go unreported and/or are not investigated. Police response times can be long, if they respond at all. Lack of adequate transportation is often cited as an excuse for slow response. Most police officers do not speak English and will not actively pursue a bribe if language is a barrier.

All persons should attempt to cooperate and follow the instructions of police at checkpoints to avoid problems. All visitors should obey all local laws and follow any instructions given to them by local authorities.

Under the JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2008, American citizens are prohibited from purchasing Burmese rubies or jade. Known as Public Law 110-286, the JADE Act, among other things, prohibits the importation to the U.S. of jadeite and rubies mined or extracted from Burma (and of articles of jewelry containing jadeite or rubies, including those that are substantially transformed in third countries).

Always ask permission before taking a photograph. Local citizens may request a small fee for taking a picture of them or their surroundings. Do not photograph government buildings, embassies, military installations, airports, harbors, or other locations or items of a possible security or intelligence interest; cameras may be confiscated. For more information, please review OSAC's Report "Picture This: Dos and Don'ts for Photography."

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How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Corruption is a problem throughout police ranks. Low-pay and low-morale create an environment in which even bribes of a few dollars can make allegations disappear. Corruption is prevalent, and some government officials reportedly collaborate with criminals or carry out crimes themselves under the protection of their official status. It is not recommended to pay bribes, comply with requests for a “gift,” or pay on-the-spot fines.

If an officer persists, comply with instructions, identify yourself as an American citizen, obtain the officer’s name and badge number, and politely ask to speak with a supervisor and/or request to be taken to police headquarters for further processing. Police are required to notify the U.S. Embassy when an American citizen has been arrested; however, they consistently fail to do so. If arrested, be certain to assert this right and demand to speak with a representative from the U.S. Embassy by calling (95)-1-536-509 x4240, or if after normal business hours (95)-9-512-4330.

Crime Victim Assistance

In Rangoon and Mandalay, the central police telephone number is 199. The fire emergency number is 191 or 192. The tourist police telephone number is 01-378-479 in Rangoon and 09-448-539-507 in Mandalay. The U.S. Embassy maintains a liaison with local law enforcement officials and is available to assist American citizens during their stay in Burma.

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Medical Emergencies

Medical facilities and services fall critically short of U.S and European standards. There is no 911 equivalent ambulance service. Trauma care is extremely limited, and local hospitals should only be used in the event of an extreme medical emergency. Many primary health care workers, especially in rural areas, lack adequate professional training. Instances of misdiagnosis, improper treatment, and the administration of improper drugs have been reported. Quality and comprehensive medical services are very limited in Rangoon and are almost nonexistent for all but the most minor treatment outside of the capital. Due to inadequate diagnostic equipment, lack of medical resources, and limited medical specialty personnel, complex diagnoses and treatment are unavailable.

Medicines may be in short supply and approximately, and approximate 30 percent of medicines are counterfeit products of questionable quality. Visitors should bring their own supply of medications, as the quality of medications is inconsistent. In the event medications (over-the-counter medication, antibiotics, allergy remedies, or malaria prophylaxis) are needed, travelers may contact the U.S. Embassy's American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit to receive general information about reliable pharmacies. For more information, please refer to OSAC's Report, "Traveling with Medications."

Visitors with serious health concerns (diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or who are on blood thinners (with the exception of aspirin)) are discouraged from traveling to Burma.

Most health care facilities require patients to pay before being admitted to a hospital or provided treatment and require them to settle the bill in full with cash prior to discharge from

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the hospital. Foreigners are commonly charged a higher rate than local residents for most medical services.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

ACS maintains a list of physicians, clinics, and pharmacies as generated by the Embassy Health Unit. The Embassy does not officially endorse specific medical providers.

Rangoon

The LEO Clinic

located at the Victoria Hospital

No. 68 Tawwin Road, 9 Mile Mayangone Township, Yangon

Tel: 09-651-238

24-hour emergency line: 094-921-8410

(Victoria Hospital in Rangoon accepts credit cards)

LEO is the only hospital offering in-country medevac services

The SOS Clinic

located at the Inya Lake Hotel

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37 Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon

Tel: 09-667-871 or 09-667-879

24-hour emergency line: 094-932-5722

The International Clinic

located at Parami Hospital (11th floor)

No. 60 (G-1) Parami Road, Mayagone Township, Yangon

Tel: 09-657-987

24-hour emergency line: 09-319-11541

International Emergency Services (IES)

at Parami Hospital

No. 60 (G-1) Parami Road, Mayagone Township, Yangon

Tel: 09-660 083

24-hour emergency line: 09-651-674

Nay Pyi Taw

Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (also called “the 1,000 Bedded Hospital”)

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Zabu Thiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw (Near Tha Pyae Gone roundabout)

067-420-096/97

Tel: 09-519-8993, 09-681-3239

Thiri Thukha Medicare Center (Private)

No. 1194, Yaza Tun Ni Road, Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw

Tel: 09-830-3830, 067-23553, 067-251-65169

Fax: 067-23875

Bawga Theiddhi Hospital (Private)

At Ziwaka Pharmacy Shop, Tha Pyae Gone Market, Zabu Thiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw

Tel: 067-432-361, 09-493-19573, 09-493-19574

Fax: 067-432362

Oattaya Thiri Hospital

Yarza Thingaha Rd, Oattaya Thiri Shopping Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

(Corner of Yaza Thingaha Road & Thiri Mandine Street)

Tel: 067-417-003 / 067-417-350-4

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

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Air medevac services can be arranged through the SOS Clinic or through LEO.

Recommended Insurance Posture

All travelers are advised to purchase insurance to cover medical evacuation in case of a serious accident, injury, or illness. Medical evacuation can cost thousands of dollars, depending on the severity of the situation, so all travelers should ensure their policies provide sufficient coverage.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Travelers are advised to see a physician prior to travelling to ensure that appropriate vaccines, immunizations, and precautions are taken. These include, but are not limited to, tetanus, polio, meningitis, typhoid, hepatitis A and B, and rabies. Gastrointestinal diseases, tuberculosis, dengue fever, malaria, rabies, and Japanese encephalitis also pose a serious risk to travelers.

Extended stays outside of Rangoon require Japanese encephalitis vaccination and malaria prophylaxis. Visitors should begin taking malaria prophylaxis prior to arrival and hand-carry enough medication for the duration of their visit. The cholera vaccine is not required.

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Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or at:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/burma>.

For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the infectious diseases section of the World Health Organization (WHO) website at:
http://www.who.int/topics/infectious_diseases/en/. The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including detailed country-specific health information:
<http://www.who.int/countries/en/>.

OSAC Country Council Information

Embassy Rangoon has an active OSAC Country Council that meets quarterly and communicates regularly via a Google Group. For more information on the Country Council, please contact RSO Jessica M. Moore at MooreJM@state.gov or (95)-1-536-509 x4333. The RSO provides country briefings for representatives of American businesses, non-governmental organizations, academia, and faith-based organizations as requested. One of the best sources for overseas security information (travel advisories, country background notes, and links to other U.S. government travel and security services) is <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>. To reach OSAC's East Asia Pacific team, please email OSACEAP@state.gov.

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U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

110 University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Rangoon, Burma

Normal business hours: Mon-Fri, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Non-emergency American Citizen Services hours: Monday-Friday, 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
(appointment required)

The Embassy is available 24 hours a day to assist U.S. citizens in emergencies.

Embassy Contact Numbers

Main telephone (24-hour): (95)1-536-509

Consular Section: (95)-1-536-509 x4240

Duty Officer: (95)-9-512-4330

Post One: (95)-1-536-509 x4014

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RSO Office: (95)-1-536-509 x4225

Website: <http://burma.usembassy.gov/service.html>

Embassy Guidance

A passport and visa are required for entry; passports must have at least six months validity in them. The government's visa-on-arrival program is available only to business travelers sponsored by businesses registered with the Ministry of Commerce. There is no visa-on-arrival program for tourists; however, Burma's e-visa program allows tourists to apply for a visa online rather than physically applying at an embassy or consulate. Once tourists are approved for the visa, the visa needs to be used within three months. Tourists can use the e-visa to enter at Yangon International Airport or at Mandalay International Airport. Visas can still be obtained at the Burmese Embassy and the Burmese consulates in the U.S.

The Burmese Embassy is located at 2300 S Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

Tel: (202) 332-3344

Website: <http://www.mewashingtondc.com/>.

All Americans should enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (<https://step.state.gov/step/>) when traveling to Burma. U.S. citizens wishing to conduct business in Burma should consult the Embassy Rangoon Economic Section website for

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advice and words of caution <http://burma.usembassy.gov/business.html>. Visitors are also encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy Consular Section online or in person.

All travelers and American citizens residing in Burma should consult the Department of State's website (<http://travel.state.gov>) for current information about the security situation within the country prior to travel. American citizens are advised to refer to the Department of State Country Specific Information <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html>) for additional information. This resource provides information on a variety of issues intended to ensure your trip is safe and trouble-free. The Embassy Consular Section also maintains a blog for U.S. Citizens called "Rangoon Snippets" (<http://blogs.usembassy.gov/burma/>) that has relevant information for those residing or visiting Burma and a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/US-Embassy-Rangoon-Consular-Section-164487086904429/?fref=ts&ref=br_tf).

The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Rangoon can offer some assistance in due diligence endeavors (contact: Arkar Kyaw; AmCham Myanmar Chapter Coordinator at Arkar@amchammyanmar.com). In addition, the Embassy's Commercial Section can assist companies in identifying legitimate business partners (contact: Manoj S. Desai, Senior Commercial Officer at DesaiMS@state.gov).

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

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Do not respond to any unsolicited opportunities to make money, including business opportunities that seem too good to be true. Beware of merchants who offer to sell you gems, gold, semi-precious stones, etc. These types of activities could result in substantial loss of money or violation of local laws. Do not purchase gems/minerals from an unlicensed source.

Situational Awareness Best Practices

All American citizens are advised to follow common-sense guidelines to avoid becoming victims of crime. Visitors should always maintain situational awareness and are cautioned not to become complacent about personal security. Appear to walk with a purpose; do not give the impression that you are lost or wandering. There is evidence that criminals observe these vulnerabilities and target the individuals that display them.

At night, it is recommended that visitors explore city sights in groups or with a partner. Maintain control of your personal items when in public areas and move away from anyone who you believe is acting suspiciously. Thieves often attempt to distract a victim by asking questions, begging for money, bumping/jostling the individual, or offering to sell items. While the victim is distracted, an accomplice may take a piece of luggage or pick the victim's pocket or purse. If individuals take the simple precaution of not leaving personal items unattended/unprotected, the chances of being victimized are vastly reduced. Do not leave valuable items unsecured in your residence/quarters. Do not carry valuables in excess of immediate needs, and keep what you need in a secure place on your person. Avoid wearing flashy jewelry, clothing, or carrying expensive cameras in public. You should never carry anything that you are not willing to relinquish in a confrontation with a thief. In the event that an armed criminal confronts you, immediately hand over the desired property to avoid escalation or injury.

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Be alert to any unusual surveillance or activity near the places you frequently visit. Vary your routes/times.

Visitors during the rainy season should exercise caution while travelling near lakes, rivers, or the ocean. Visitors should familiarize themselves with flood-prone areas and travel in a high-clearance 4x4 vehicle.

Supervise/escort all workers in your quarters. Always secure the doors and windows to your residence/hotel room. Do not store excessive currency or other valuable items at your residence. They may attract the attention of criminals.

Carefully protect all financial and personal information. Do not discuss travel plans or other business in a venue where others can hear you.

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