



## Paraguay 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Assault; Financial Security; Revolutions; Riots/Civil Unrest; Intellectual Property Rights Infringement; Drug Trafficking; Kidnapping; Bribery; Disease Outbreak

Western Hemisphere > Paraguay; Western Hemisphere > Paraguay > Asuncion

5/9/2016

### Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: High

### Crime Threats

Crime continues to be a serious concern. Within Asunción, the police continue to report a higher level of crime (property crimes, assaults) in the central downtown area. The majority of the crimes committed in downtown Asunción take place at night. Criminals do target those believed to be wealthy, including expatriates. Crime is generally non-violent, but the common use of knives and firearms in muggings and street crime creates the possibility for serious harm. Recent statistics and high profile incidents indicate a growing willingness by criminals to use firearms. Street crime (pickpocketing, mugging), is common in downtown Asunción, at the bus terminal, and on public buses. Armed robbery, car theft, burglaries, and occasionally home invasions are a problem. Street crime (pickpocketing, mugging) is prevalent on public buses and in urban areas.

---

*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.*



Incidents of armed muggers using motorcycles (motochorros) to approach their victims have also been reported. In a few instances, they have wounded/killed victims who attempted to flee or refused to turn over valuables. Although men have been victims, more often the victims tend to be women walking alone or in a small group.

There have been instances of bank employees working with organized criminal groups to identify and rob individuals after they withdraw large amounts of cash. In addition, organized criminal groups have also targeted armored bank cars in transit or while conducting money pickups at banks.

#### Others Areas of Concern

The Chacarita area in downtown Asunción along the river is a known high crime area, which even local police refrain from entering.

It is recommended that U.S. citizen visitors to the Tri-Border Area (TBA) remain especially vigilant. The population centers of the TBA include Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), Puerto Iguazú (Argentina), and Foz do Iguazú (Brazil).

The Embassy requires employees to obtain permission to travel to the departments of Alto Parana, Amambay, Canindeyu, San Pedro, and Concepcion due to high crime levels.

---

*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.*



## Transportation-Safety Situation

### Road Safety and Road Conditions

Some roads in Asunción and other large cities are paved; however, these roads often flood during heavy rains, making them impassable. Potholes appear suddenly and are often unrepaired for months.

Defensive driving is a requirement, as traffic is extremely congested and unpredictable. Only minimal standards are required to obtain a driver's license, and driver's education is uncommon. Drivers routinely ignore traffic regulations, and many drive without insurance coverage. Many traffic lights are inoperable or difficult to see. In 2015, there were approximately 939 deaths attributed to traffic accidents in Paraguay.

Paraguay has seen a marked increase in the prevalence of motorcycles. Paraguayans can obtain motorcycles for very little money and with no formal training. Motorcycles pass on both sides of vehicles, often in a very dangerous manner, and sometimes on sidewalks. Due in large part to a lack of enforceable traffic and safety regulations, a majority of traffic deaths occur in accidents between a vehicle and motorcycle.

---

*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.*



Nearly all rural roads are unpaved and can be impassable during the rainy season (November-April). Road signs indicating hazards are lacking in many areas. Driving or traveling at night on highways outside urban areas is not recommended due to the number of vehicles without proper lights.

### Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation safety is a major concern. Public bus accidents occur frequently and are caused primarily by driver negligence. The level of both driver training and safety awareness does not reach minimum U.S. standards. Many buses pass through high crime areas and are susceptible to robberies.

Use clearly marked taxis with meters in lieu of public buses if possible.

### Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

### Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

---

*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.*



In 2015, the government continued to cooperate with the U.S. on counterterrorism matters, and the U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program contributed to building counterterrorism law enforcement capacity. Paraguay continued to face challenges of ineffective immigration, customs, and law enforcement controls along its porous borders, particularly the TBA. Illicit activities there remain potential funding sources for terrorist organizations, most notably Hizballah.

Since 2008, persons claiming to be part of the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP), an internal criminal group dedicated to a socialist revolution, have been active in the departments of Concepcion and northern San Pedro. The EPP is a relatively small group, but it does have local support in the areas in which it operates.

In 2014, former EPP members – reportedly expelled from the group over disciplinary issues – created the Armed Peasant Association (ACA), which has similar leftist pursuits and operates in the same areas as the EPP. EPP/ACA activity consists largely of isolated attacks on remote police and army posts or on ranchers/peasants accused of collaborating with security services. In 2015, a number of extortions, kidnappings, and murders in northern San Pedro and southern Concepcion were attributed to the EPP or ACA.

#### Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

Paraguayans are generally pro-American.



## Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Paraguay is a constitutional democracy with a developing economy. Paraguay has not traditionally been affected by political violence, but demonstrations are not uncommon. Land invasions, marches, and organized protests occur, but these events rarely turn violent. International observers recognized general and municipal elections in 2013 and 2015, respectively, as free and fair.

Political Violence Rating: Medium

### Civil Unrest

There are political protests, demonstrations, and roadblocks by civil society groups (peasant organizations, students, unions, government employees). Throughout 2015, there were numerous demonstrations in Asunción and the countryside. Most protests and demonstrations were by workers demanding increased benefits or protesting government policies. Peasant farmers have come to Asunción to protest a lack of jobs, land, and housing. Demonstrations are typically non-violent and coordinated with authorities and police, but there have been incidents of violence.

Demonstrations typically occur in the downtown area near government buildings and near the presidential residence (across the street from the U.S. Embassy). In Asunción, protestors generally gather in downtown public squares and parks. Outside of the capital, protestors'

---

*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.*



most common tactic is to congregate on major roadways to block traffic and disrupt normal traffic flow to Asunción or Ciudad del Este.

Visitors should avoid locations where crowds have gathered to protest. Upon encountering a roadblock, visitors should avoid going through it and either wait for the roadblock to end or find an alternate route.

## **Post-specific Concerns**

### Environmental Hazards

There have been cyclical floods.

### Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

Protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) is an ongoing concern, although the government has made progress in recent years. Concerns remain about inadequate protection against unfair commercial use of proprietary test or other data generated to obtain marketing approval for agrochemical or pharmaceutical products and the shortcomings in patent regime. Law 3283 from 2007 and Law 3519 from 2008,

---

*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.*



(1) require pharmaceutical products and agrochemical products to be registered first in Paraguay to be eligible for data protection;

(2) allow regulatory agencies to use test data in support of similar agricultural chemical product applications filed by third parties; and

(3) limit data protection to five years.

Additionally, Law 2593/05 that modifies the patent law has no regulatory enforcement. Because of this, foreign pharmaceutical companies have seen their patented products openly replicated and marketed under other names by Paraguayan pharmaceutical companies.

Ciudad del Este has been named in either the Notorious Markets List or the Special 301 Report for over 15 years. Regional organized crime groups are reportedly responsible for the bulk of counterfeit and copyright-infringing goods in Ciudad del Este. The border crossing and city have been the focus of U.S. and international attention as a hub for the distribution of counterfeit and pirated products in the region and beyond.

The U.S. and Paraguay signed an IPR MOU in June 2015, under which Paraguay committed to take specific steps to improve its IPR protection and enforcement environment. Additionally, the MOU creates a bilateral partnership in which the U.S. supports Paraguay's efforts to strengthen the legal protection and enforcement of IPR. As a result of the MOU's signing and the commitments Paraguay assumed under the MOU, USTR removed Paraguay from the 2015 Special 301 Watch List pursuant to an Out-of-Cycle Review.

## Privacy Concerns

---

*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.*



The government respects the privacy of both citizens and foreign residents, resorting to monitoring tactics only in the case of sensitive criminal investigations.

### Drug-related Crimes

The departments of Alto Parana, Amambay, Canindeyú, San Pedro, and Concepcion continue to suffer from violence associated with narco-trafficking. Paraguay is a transit country for cocaine and the hemisphere's second largest producer of marijuana. Narcotics traffickers use violence to settle matters between rival groups, and it is believed that members of the Brazilian organized crime gang First Command of the Capital (PCC) are operating in Pedro Juan Caballero (Amambay), Salto de Guairá (Canindeyú), and Ciudad del Este (Alto Parana).

The Department of Amambay (capital city is Pedro Juan Caballero) is the most violent area of the country with the highest rate of homicides. The vast majority of the homicides in Amambay are believed to be drug-related.

### Kidnapping Threat

There were no U.S. citizens reported kidnapped in 2015, 2014, 2013, or 2012.

---

*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.*



In April 2011, a U.S. minor who resided in Paraguay was kidnapped in Coronel Oviedo, Caaguazú (approximately 100 miles west of Asunción). The child was able to free himself after a few hours and ran home. The kidnappers were tried, convicted, and are in prison.

The EPP was involved in the April 2014 kidnapping-for-ransom of 16-year old Arlan Fick, who was taken from his family's Concepcion home and held for eight months before being released. The EPP is also believed to be responsible for the July 2014 kidnapping of police officer Edelio Morinigo. In August, the EPP claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of a Mennonite in San Pedro department for a ransom of US\$500,000. He was believed to still be held by the EPP at year's end, despite the farmer's family having paid the ransom in November.

Most agree that the majority of kidnappings are not reported and are handled exclusively by family members of the victims.

Virtual kidnappings have also been reported. Virtual kidnapping schemes typically involve an individual or criminal organization who contacts a victim via telephone and demands payment for the return of a "kidnapped" family member/friend. While no actual kidnapping has taken place, the callers often use co-conspirators to convince their victims of the legitimacy of the threat. Most schemes use various techniques to instill a sense of fear, panic, and urgency in an effort to rush the victim into making a hasty decision. Over the past several years, the region, including Paraguay, has seen an increase in virtual kidnappings reports.

## **Police Response**

---

*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.*



The Paraguayan National Police (PNP) suffer from a serious, ongoing lack of resources and training. As a result, police response times vary greatly, and investigations rarely result in successful apprehension. The police do have a 911 system that was implemented in 2011, and response times have improved.

The PNP acknowledges that many crimes go unreported due to lack of confidence in the judicial process. There have been credible reports that police have collaborated with criminal elements. Due to the lack of resources and a tolerance for corruption, the PNP standards remain below those considered acceptable in developed countries. Although the U.S. government continues to assist the PNP and the Ministry of Interior with equipment and training, there has been little improvement that reaches to the level of the citizenry.

#### How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Police detention or harassment of visitors is not commonplace. U.S. citizens are instructed to contact American Citizen Services (ACS) in the consular section of the Embassy at (595)(21) 213-715 in the event that they are detained or harassed.

While not common, if during a traffic stop or other detention the police demand a bribe, visitors should refuse to pay.

---

*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.*



## Crime Victim Assistance

The following are emergency numbers for use in the Asunción metropolitan area:

Emergency Police: 911

National Police Fire Emergency: 131

Volunteer Firemen of Paraguay: 132

Volunteer Firemen of Asunción: (595)(21) 225-400

Medical Emergency: (595)(21) 204-800

Police Headquarters: (595)(21) 445-858

American citizens may also contact American Citizen Services (ACS) in the consular section of the Embassy at (595)(21) 213-715 in the event they are victim of a crime.

## Police/Security Agencies

The PNP act as the police force for the entire country. The PNP have various specialized units: K-9, explosives disposal, and special operations.

---

*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.*



## Medical Emergencies

Medical care in public hospitals, especially outside of the Asunción metropolitan area, is substandard. Hospitals and clinics often do not possess the facilities or levels of experience and training considered acceptable in the U.S. In addition, a shortage of nurses and doctors often leaves clinics staffed with unqualified personnel.

Adequate medical facilities, prescription and over-the-counter medications, supplies, and services are available in Asunción. Elsewhere these are limited, and in rural areas may not exist.

Ambulance services include: EME - (595)(21) 211-454 211-453; SASA - (595)(21) 561-000; and GEMA - (595)(21)600-274.

## Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Please see American Citizens Services on the Embassy Website for a list of hospitals and physicians in Paraguay.

## Sanatorio San Roque

---

*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.*



Eligio Ayala c/ Pai Perez

Tel: (595)(21)248-9000

Sanatorio Medico La Costa

Avenida Artigas #1500 (300 meters from General Santos)

Tel: (595)(21)217-1000

Centro Medico Bautista

Argentina c/ Campos Cervera

Tel: (595)(21) 688-9000

ER: (595)(21) 688-9231

Sanatorio Migone Battilana

Eligio Ayala 1293 c/ Curupayty

Tel: (595)(21)498-200

#### Recommended Insurance Posture

There is no air ambulance service from Paraguay to any foreign destination. It is recommended that visitors consider purchasing private air medical evacuation insurance

---

*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.*



before travelling.

## CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Dengue fever, a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes, is endemic year-round. In 2015, health officials reported a total of 15,824 positive cases of dengue and 4,288 of chikungunya. Dengue fever is becoming more frequent in tropical and equatorial climates. Symptoms can include fever, rash, severe headache, joint pain, and muscle or bone pain. There is no specific treatment for dengue, and vaccines are still in the developmental phase.

Health officials have also confirmed a number of Zika virus cases. Zika virus is a mosquito-borne illness that can be spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby. Among other effects, there have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. For additional information about Zika, including travel advisories, visit the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

In December 2015, a yellow fever epidemic alert was announced for the region by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The CDC and the Embassy recommend that visitors obtain the Yellow Fever vaccination due to the current alert in the region.

The Aedes mosquitoes that carry these illnesses are primarily day biting and often live in homes and hotel rooms especially under beds, in bathrooms, and closets. Preventing

---

*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.*



mosquito bites is the most important way to help prevent illness. Avoidance and prevention techniques include: reducing mosquito exposure by using repellents, covering exposed skin, treating clothing and tents with permethrin, and sleeping in screened or air conditioned rooms. You can also reduce exposure through mosquito control measures, including emptying water from outdoor containers and spraying to reduce mosquito populations. Travelers should carry and use CDC-recommended insect repellents containing either 20% DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535, all of which will help diminish bites from mosquitoes as well as ticks, fleas, chiggers, etc., some of which may also carry infectious diseases.

For additional vaccine and health guidance, please visit the CDC at:

[http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/paraguay?s\\_cid=ncezid-dgmgq-travel-si  
ngle-001](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/paraguay?s_cid=ncezid-dgmgq-travel-single-001).

### **OSAC Country Council Information**

The Paraguay Country Council is located on Avenida 25 de Mayo 2090, Asunción, Paraguay. For further information, please contact the RSO or the following numbers and email: (595)(21)222-160 & 221-525 & 222-265 & 221-926 - email: [comercial@pamcham.com.py](mailto:comercial@pamcham.com.py). Website: <http://asuncion.osac.gov>. To reach the OSAC Western Hemisphere team, please email [OSACWHA@state.gov](mailto:OSACWHA@state.gov).

### **U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information**

---

*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.*



## Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

1776 Mcal Lopez, Asunción, Paraguay

## Embassy Contact Numbers

Phone: (595)(21)213-715

Regional Security Officer: (595)(21)213-715 x2026 x2274

Embassy Operator: (595)(21)213-715 x0

Embassy Marine Security Guard: (595)(21)213-715 x2210

Embassy Nurse: (595)(21)213-715 x2025

Embassy Consular Affairs: (595)(21)213-715 x2105

Embassy Economic Section: (595)(21)213-715 x 2033

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

## Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

---

*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.*



## Situational Awareness Best Practices

All visitors and business persons should maintain situational awareness. Visitors should practice common sense preventive security measures, just as they would in any large U.S. city. Do not carry or wear valuable items that will attract the attention of thieves. If you need to wear expensive jewelry or carry a camera, conceal it until reaching your destination. Be aware of the street environment and avoid contact with those who may be looking for potential targets. If your route takes you near a group of suspicious looking individuals, go into a store or bank or simply cross the street. Do not physically resist any robbery attempt. Statistics show that resistance leads to injury/death.

Do not withdraw large amounts of money from banks. Use wire transfers whenever possible.

Do not open your hotel room door until you positively confirm who is on the other side. Look out the peephole or call the front desk to confirm the visitor.

---

*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.*