



Zimbabwe 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Riots/Civil Unrest; Financial Security; Anti-American sentiment; Employee Health Safety; Counterfeiting

Africa > Zimbabwe; Africa > Zimbabwe > Harare

5/24/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Critical

Crime Threats

The greatest crime threats are crimes of opportunity (routine thefts, residential burglaries, smash-and-grab attacks at dark intersections at night (with inoperable devices), spontaneous demonstrations that are motivated by political/economic concerns, which may pose security risks to a passersby). Due to the economic challenges in 2015 that are likely to worsen in 2016, crimes of opportunity that involve a low risk of arrest and a high chance of achieving US/hard currency remain key targets of criminals.

Most residential crime incidents reported to the RSO office indicate the suspects flee in a majority of the cases when the alarm sounds and/or other robust security devices are encountered.

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Cybersecurity Issues

Harare is experiencing higher number of reports of ATM skimming and spotting incidents.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

The highest danger to a person's physical well-being in Zimbabwe is being involved in a serious road accident. Large, overloaded trucks ply the main roads; highways are often narrow and have abrupt step-downs off the asphalt onto the shoulders. Large potholes are always found in the cities and frequently on the highways (causing drivers to swerve at high speed). At highway speeds, the potholes can be very dangerous (and not seen due to poorly illuminated roadways). Livestock and pedestrians can pose hazards to traffic on urban and rural roads. Nighttime travel outside of the larger cities is substantially more dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible.

With little maintenance and frequent power outages, traffic lights are often either non-functional or there is only one light working per intersection. Due care should be used in crossing any intersection that is not clearly marked by the lights. The absence of street lights

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makes driving hazardous after dark in the cities as well. Always wear seatbelts and drive defensively.

Travelers are frequently stopped at police roadblocks and are often told they have committed some traffic infraction. Increased traffic/vehicle violations (fines) went into effect on January 1, 2016, and police officers may indicate that a “spot-fine” has been levied and demand money. Speed traps and other moving violations are strictly enforced, as there has been publically announced increased enforcement of traffic violations due to the high number of traffic deaths due to speeding, poor driving, unsafe vehicles, and aggressive driving.

Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation in the cities is dominated by second-hand Japanese mini-vans referred to as “combis.” Combi operators are required to obtain licenses from the Ministry of Transport and the city council where their routes are located. Combis are frequently in disrepair, and the drivers rarely follow regulations of the road. They are almost universally over-capacity, often compounding all of the other deficiencies. There are few marked taxis in Harare. If you are staying at a reputable hotel/lodge, the front desk likely will have company taxis available or associations of known drivers they can refer to a guest.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

The Robert Mugabe International Airport has not experienced any prominent accidents in the recent past. The most notable airlines serving Harare are Emirates, South African Airlines,

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Ethiopian Air, and Kenya Airways. Domestic flights are most frequently served by Air Zimbabwe and FastJet. Air Zimbabwe uses older/dated Boeing and Xian MA60 aircraft, mostly flying the Harare to Johannesburg and Harare to Bulawayo and Victoria Falls routes. .

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

The government attempts to exercise strong control within its borders and over its population, and as a result, there are very few acts of extremism in the country. However, due to the lack of adequate funding, equipment, and resources, it is possible that there are nefarious individuals transiting/residing in Zimbabwe (who departed from other African countries) due to multiple unofficial crossing points and a lack of airborne or electronic monitoring.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

There is anti-American, and to a certain extent, anti-Western sentiment. The government publicly blames economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other Western countries as one of the main reasons for its economic problems.

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Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: High

Civil Unrest

Civil unrest is a growing likelihood due to the economic hardships, drought, and political instability as 2018 national elections loom. The government restricts large gatherings of people and generally issues permits for demonstrations only if the demonstration is clearly in favor of the government or a cause that the government supports. If a demonstration is approved by the government, but considered possibly inflammatory, the demonstrators will be accompanied by a considerable number of riot police.

Religious/Ethnic Violence

The Muslim community is small and close-knit and has resisted efforts by outsiders to infiltrate the community and/or seek to spread beliefs that are inconsistent with traditional religious observances.

Post-specific Concerns

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Critical Infrastructure Concerns

Zimbabwe has an old, inadequate infrastructure in place. There are concerns related to water availability/safety/delivery and sewage disposal, the supply of consistent and adequate power to businesses and residents, and the upkeep of transportation systems to include highways and trains.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

Intellectual property theft centers on the piracy of music, movies, and computer software.

Privacy Concerns

Due to the low level of automation and the inaccessibility of private information, concerns related to privacy are low. However, IT capabilities are being developed and growing in capacity (wireless hot spots, bandwidth, digital access).

Drug-related Crimes

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While drug related crimes do occur (primarily marijuana), they are not an overwhelming problem.

Police Response

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) are underfunded and poorly trained. They may find it difficult to respond to a call for mobile assistance. Often they require a complainant to go to the nearest police station and pick up an officer to assist. Be aware that the level of competence varies. For vehicle accidents be patient, they will come, but it may take an extended period.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Comply with the instructions you receive from the ZRP. At the first opportunity, inform the consular section of your country's embassy. The telephone number for American Citizen Services is +263-(0)4-250-593.

Crime Victim Assistance

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Contact the local police for assistance with any crime. After doing so, contact the consular section of your country's embassy. The telephone number for American Citizen Services is +263-(0)4-250-593.

Police/Security Agencies

Vetting of prospective employees can be completed with a criminal check and a visit to a local police station.

Medical Emergencies

Employer-provided health insurance may be accepted at some health care providers in Harare. However, hospitals often require advance payment for services. This would require pre-prepared access to cash, and then making a claim for reimbursement from your insurance company after the event.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Avenues Clinic

Corner Baines & Mazoe Avenues

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Tel: +263-(0)4 251 144

St Annes Hospital

King George Road, Avondale

Tel: +263-(0)4 339-933

AMI

15 Lanark Road

Tel: +263 (0)4 700666/7/8

Available Air Ambulance Services

Emergency Medical Rescue Ambulance Service (EMRAS)

81 Baines Avenue, Avenues

Tel: +263 (0)4 250-011

Cell: +263 (0) 772 141610

ACE Air & Ambulance

No 2 Mount Road, Avondale

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Tel: +263 (0)4 302141

Cell: +263 782 999 901/2

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

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

OSAC Country Council Information

Regional Security Officer Harare: countsrld@state.gov. To reach OSAC's Africa team, please email OSACAF@state.gov.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

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U.S. Embassy Harare

172 Herbert Chitepo

Harare, Zimbabwe

Hours of Operation: 0800-1700

Embassy Contact Numbers

Switchboard: +263-(0)4 250-593

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

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Situational Awareness Best Practices

There are those who would like to separate you from your money, so please take appropriate precautions. Do not flash your money in big wads; do not carry all of your money in one location. Please use normal precautions and utilize ATMs at reputable banks, many of whom employ uniform guards to protect their ATM devices.

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Avoid after dark walking in town centers and be alert to your surroundings. Walking alone in the central business district of Harare is also not advisable after dark.

In Harare, physical (residential) security precautions should be taken: installation of anti-forced entry devices (solid doors/grilles) and robust perimeter fence at least 6 ½ feet high that is also topped with razor or electric wire. An automatic or manned gate control mechanism is advised. Any house alarm that sounds an audible alarm (panic) is very useful and also recommended.

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