



Sudan 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Carjacking; Cyber; NGO; Religious Terrorism; Anti-American sentiment; Riots/Civil Unrest; Floods; Employee Health Safety; Intellectual Property Rights Infringement; Surveillance; Kidnapping; Disease Outbreak

Africa > Sudan; Africa > Sudan > Khartoum

5/24/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

Crime Threats

Crime rates remain relatively low in north and central Sudan, including Khartoum state. In the past 12 months, U.S. Embassy Khartoum has received no reports of Americans being targeted for criminal activity in Khartoum and/or north/central Sudan. Criminal activity is generally non-violent and non-confrontational.

Most crimes reported are property crimes (motor vehicle theft, burglary, larceny-theft, arson). Pickpocketing, bag snatches, smash-and-grabs, and car break-ins have also been reported.

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An increase of violent crimes against off-duty police officers was evident during the last quarter of 2015 in Omdurman city, which is approximately three kilometers from central Khartoum state. These crimes included armed robbery and homicide.

Blades, primarily double-edged knives and machetes, continue to be the weapons of choice in violent assaults.

Carjacking by gangs and militia groups continues to be a common occurrence throughout the Darfur region. The threat of other violent crime (home invasions, armed robberies, kidnappings) is particularly high in Darfur, as the government has limited capacity and resources to combat crime there. In addition, government-supported militias and other heavily-armed Darfuri rebel groups are known to have carried out criminal attacks against internally displaced persons, vulnerable migrants, and other foreigners.

In the eastern region, organized crime networks are engaged in smuggling and trafficking activities through the porous borders with Eritrea and Ethiopia. The government is attempting to address this problem with an intensive focus on anti-trafficking efforts; however, the authorities often do not have the resources to confront these groups.

Cybersecurity Issues

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Poor information infrastructure leads to a wide range of risks in cyber space. Cyber actors are developing capabilities to commit crime and to support terrorism activities. Terrorist groups are known to use platforms in cyber space, mainly through social networks, to promote their agendas in Sudan and to support their recruitment efforts.

Other Areas of Concern

The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to Sudan, urges U.S. citizens to avoid all travel to the Darfur region and the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, and advises them to carefully consider the risks of travel in other areas of Sudan. The ability of U.S. Embassy Khartoum to provide services to U.S. citizens in emergency situations outside of the Khartoum area is limited and dependent on security conditions. The ability to provide assistance is particularly limited in southern Sudan and in Darfur.

All of Darfur and Blue Nile and South Kordofan states should be avoided unless the traveling party has business with either a government agency or a humanitarian NGO; even then, close attention should be paid to security considerations, as areas of Darfur can become dangerous on short notice. Air travel is the recommended mode of travel, and in many cases the only form of transportation. Travelers should check for the latest updated information on the UN demining program and to verify what roads are considered safe.

Travel outside of metropolitan Khartoum can be challenging. Before traveling anywhere outside of Khartoum, you should check news reports and local conditions prior to departure. You must first obtain the proper travel authorization from the government. If travel is approved, you should carry multiple copies of the authorization with you, as authorities will

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require them at checkpoints.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Driving conditions are hazardous throughout most of Sudan. Drivers should be always aware of unsafe and un-improved road surfaces, unskilled drivers, and the presence of non-roadworthy vehicles. In general, the main roads in Khartoum and north/central Sudan are paved but haphazardly maintained. A turn off of a main road can lead to blocks of unpaved dirt and pot holed roads. At night, most streets are poorly/not illuminated. Drivers often do not comply with traffic regulations. Driving excessively fast or slow is very common on the main roads. Drivers commonly ignore traffic signals, stop in traffic lanes, and make turns from the opposite lane with complete disregard for oncoming traffic. In addition, roads can contain poorly-maintained vehicles, three-wheeled motorized taxi vehicles, donkey carts, unrestrained livestock, overloaded tandem-axle cargo trucks, and pedestrians.

Those who are involved in traffic accidents need to summon police assistance. It is inadvisable to make restitution at the scene, especially if livestock or pedestrians are involved. Drivers should be wary of crowds gathering at the scene of an accident and should depart the scene if they perceive an imminent threat to their safety.

Ensure vehicle doors and windows are locked while traveling, even during daylight hours.

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Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation is dominated by three-wheeled motorized vehicles, a few taxis, and mini-buses. Bus travel is normally limited to within and between major towns. Vehicles are often poorly maintained. Passenger facilities are basic and crowded. Bus schedules are often unpublished and subject to change without notice. While there is some public transit to rural communities, most areas lack standardized and well maintained public transportation.

Arrangements should be made with your in-country business partners or your hotel to secure trusted transportation.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), there are 12 airports with paved runways. Khartoum International Airport is in the capital city, is the largest airport in the country, and serves airlines from across Africa and the Middle East. A new Khartoum Airport is under construction 40km south of Khartoum. It will eventually replace Khartoum International Airport with an initial passenger capacity of 7.5 million per annum.

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Other airports with paved runways serving Sudan's states include Damazin Airport, Dongola Airport, Ed Daein Airport, El Fasher Airport, El Obeid Airport, Geneina Airport, Kadugli Airport, Kassala Airport, Nyala Airport, Port Sudan Airport, and Zalingei Airport.

Maintain constant contact with your baggage and ensure it does not contain illicit items (alcohol, pornography, and/or objects that could be used as weapons). U.S. citizens have been removed from international airlines and detained when suspect items have been detected in checked baggage.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Critical

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

Elements of ISIL, al-Qa'ida, and Boko Haram are believed to recruit in Sudan. The government has taken steps to limit the activities of these terrorist organizations and has worked to disrupt foreign fighters' use of Sudan as a logistics base and transit point. Sudan enacted legislation to combat organized crimes (human trafficking) and was delisted from the Financial Action Task Force watch list related to terrorism financing. Regionally, Sudan contributed military forces to the Saudi-led coalition aimed at restoring President Hadi's government in Yemen.

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Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

On September 14, 2012, religious political operatives used a controversial anti-Islamic movie trailer and a German Supreme Court ruling to instigate a mob of approximately 4,000 protestors to attack foreign embassies. Protestors ransacked and set ablaze the German Embassy and attempted to do the same to the U.S. Embassy. During the seven-hour long siege, the U.S. Embassy compound sustained extensive damage. Hundreds of rocks and stones – hurled by both hand and sling shot – destroyed more than 20 windows around the Embassy compound's façade. No individuals have faced prosecution by the authorities for inciting the riots.

Non-violent, organized protests against U.S. sanctions were carried out in close proximity of the Embassy's compound on September 16, 2015, and on November 3, 2015.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: High

Civil Unrest

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The situations in Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and the disputed area of Abyei have deteriorated due to the escalation of armed conflict among rebel groups, tribes, government-supported militias, and the government. Violent flare-ups break out between armed militia groups and military forces with little notice, particularly in the Darfur region and in areas on the border with South Sudan. Hostilities between security forces and armed opposition groups in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, including the disputed area of Abyei, present real and immediate dangers to travelers.

Anti-government protests and localized demonstrations occur periodically in Khartoum.

In September 2013, violent demonstrations erupted in Omdurman, Khartoum North, and Khartoum in response to lifting fuel subsidies. Rioters burned gas stations and shop stalls throughout the greater Khartoum area. Security forces used batons, tear gas, and live fire to disperse the large crowds occupying city streets. The police restored order; however, over 200 people died in the police response.

In December 2015, students of the Sudan University of Science and Technology protested the shortage of propane gas, high prices of bread, the general increase in the cost of living, and the deterioration of services provided by the state. A small segment of the students burned trash and threw Molotov cocktails. Security forces were deployed, and the protestors were dispersed with no casualties reported.

In January 2015, demonstrations in protest of the Charlie Hebdo satirical publication were organized but were well-controlled by authorities and quickly dispersed.

Religious/Ethnic Violence

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The African Union-United Nations hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) consistently reports on incidents of religious/ethnic violence throughout the five Darfur states. In early January 2016, UNAMID reported that clashes between Arab nomads and Tama tribesmen left four Masalit tribe villages burnt and an undetermined number of casualties.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Areas adjacent to the Nile River are subject to flooding during the rainy season (July-September).

During the summer, Sudan experiences many “haboobs.” These dust storms move in as a wall of sand extending upward of 3,000 feet. Haboobs generally last no more than three hours but can hamper road and air travel for many hours afterward.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

Most of the historical infrastructure is run-down and clearly shows lack of maintenance. The telecommunications infrastructure appears to be the most vulnerable. Power outages and interruptions to the water supply system are a common occurrence in Khartoum.

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Transportation infrastructure, specifically the railway system, is heavily deteriorated.

In December 2015, one of the local Internet services providers reported an act of sabotage that destroyed their primary network cabling in Khartoum, resulting in interruptions of service and slow internet connections for multiple days.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

With lax laws protecting intellectual property rights and with the rise of digital technologies, some local businesses promote their services, products, and establishments with clear references to American companies' trademarks. It is not uncommon to locate establishments in Khartoum named "Starbox" (in clear reference to a U.S. coffee shop) or a restaurant called "Lucky Meal" that displays a letter "M" in its front door signage identical to a U.S. fast food chain.

Privacy Concerns

There is no expectation of privacy and no legal protection against you or your personal effects from being searched or seized. Additionally, phone conversations may be monitored by the government. The government monitors the Internet, including e-mail correspondence, through the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) and the National Intelligence and

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Security Services (NISS) cyber-crimes unit. Websites and proxy servers judged to have violated norms of public morality are blocked.

Personnel-Background Concerns

Sudan is an extremely conservative society, particularly in the capital and other areas where the Muslim population is the majority. Modest dress and behavior is expected for both men and women, to include foreigners. Loose, long-sleeved shirts and full-length skirts/slacks are recommended attire for female visitors. Women who are not Muslim are not expected or required to cover their heads. Men may wear short-sleeved shirts, but short pants are not acceptable in public.

Drug-related Crimes

There are reports of micro-trafficking and recreational use of hashish and marijuana.

Kidnapping Threat

Kidnapping foreigners for ransom continued in 2015, particularly in Darfur. These kidnappings have hindered humanitarian operations. The motives behind the kidnappings appeared to be primarily financial. Some abductees have been released unharmed after being held for as little

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as a few hours.

Despite calls by various terrorist organizations for jihad against UN forces in Darfur, there is no indication that the reported kidnappings are motivated by extremist religious ideology.

Police Response

While most police officers are generally helpful, language and cultural barriers sometimes lead to misunderstandings between law enforcement and Westerners. Very rarely will a police officer speak English.

If you break local laws in Sudan, your U.S. passport will not help you avoid arrest or prosecution. Persons violating Sudan's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Photography requires a photo permit, but even with this permit, photographing security forces, government buildings, poor neighborhoods, and anything else that may cause embarrassment to the government is prohibited. 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

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Security forces, particularly members of NISS, are known to detain individuals arbitrarily and without warrants for arrests. U.S. citizens have been arrested/detained without notification to the U.S. Embassy and without Consular access.

Dual Sudanese-U.S. citizens should bear in mind that the Sudanese government does not recognize their U.S. citizenship for consular purposes and does not provide the U.S. Embassy with courtesy notification or access to detained dual nationals.

If stopped by the police, do not respond in anger; do not raise your voice. Present your identification documents and answer questions fully. If you are detained, immediately request a consular notification to the U.S. Embassy's Duty Officer.

Crime Victim Assistance

999 - Reserve Police: This number should be called to report a crime or seek assistance in an emergency. An English speaker is assigned to each shift. The 999 dispatcher can transfer any calls as necessary.

998 - Fire Brigade (Civil Defense Police)

997 - Central Ambulance

Police/Security Agencies

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Police General Administration of Passports, Immigration and Identity Cards: Altair Mard St., Khartoum / Tel: 1-837-82338.

Police General Administration of Central Investigations: Abed Khatim St., Khartoum / to contact Central Investigations please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

Police General Administration of Prisons and Reformation: Alzaber Basha St., Khartoum / to contact Prisons and Reformation please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

Police General Administration of Civil Defense: Katrina St., Khartoum / Tel: 1-834-67777 or in case of a fire please dial 998

Police General Administration of Wildlife Protection: Madni St., Khartoum / to contact Wildlife Protection please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

Police General Administration of Customs: Haray St., Khartoum / to contact Customs please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

Police General Administration of States' Affairs: Nile St., Khartoum / to contact States' Affairs please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

Police General Administration of Public Order: Jamhory St., Almogran area, Khartoum / to contact Public Order please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

Police General Administration of Central Traffic: Madni St., Soba area, Khartoum / to contact Central Traffic please dial 777

General Administration of Popular Police: Jamhory St., Almogran area, Khartoum / to contact Popular Police please dial 999 from any Sudanese-based telephone

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Medical Emergencies

All substantial medical services are located in Khartoum. In all other states, local medical assistance is limited. While economic sanctions are in place, credit cards and most checks cannot be used for payment of medical services. Those that use prescription medications should have an adequate supply with them when traveling to Sudan. For more information, please refer to OSAC's Report, "Traveling with Medications."

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Royal Care International Hospital Burri, Khartoum

Tel: 1-565-50150

<http://royalcare.sd>

Fedail Hospital Hospital Street, Khartoum

Tel: 1-837-66661

www.fedailhospital.net

Sahiroon Specialized Hospital, Burri, Khartoum

Tel: 1-832-65316

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Recommended Air Ambulance Services

International SOS

Tel: +1-215-942-8226

<https://www.internationalsos.com>

AMREF Flying Doctors

Tel: +254-20-6992299

<http://www.flydoc.org>

Recommended Insurance Posture

U.S. Embassy Khartoum strongly recommends that travelers make arrangements for air ambulance/medical evacuation insurance coverage before visiting Sudan.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

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The U.S. Embassy suggests personnel to carry a laminated card listing blood type and medical conditions. It is also recommended to include in the card a request, in Arabic, to be transported to a hospital with higher standards in case of a medical emergency.

Malaria prophylaxis is strongly recommended. All travelers should have an updated vaccination card with evidence of yellow fever vaccination.

For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/sudan>.

OSAC Country Council Information

There are no American companies operating in Sudan. Consequently, there is no OSAC Country Council in Khartoum. The nearest Country Council is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 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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The U.S. Embassy is located at U.S. Embassy Road, Kilo 10, Soba, Khartoum. The hours of operation are 8:00 am to 4:30pm, Sun-Thurs.

Embassy Contact Numbers

Embassy Operator: (249) 1-870-22000

Embassy Duty Officer: (249) 912-141-483

MSG Post One: (249) 1-870-22222

Consular section: ACSKhartoum@state.gov

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

Embassy Guidance

The primary mission of the Consular section at Embassy Khartoum is to assist U. S. citizens. Consular Officers are prepared to assist their fellow citizens in a number of ways, such as replacing U.S. passports, registering the birth abroad of U. S. citizens, or providing notarial services.

Review expiration dates and validity of your travel documents before traveling. Passengers with evidence of travel to Israel in their passports are banned entry. Always travel with extra

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copies of your traveling documents and your vaccination records. Permits and health inspection records are required for all pets. Exit visas are required, and travelers staying past their visa's expiration date will be required to pay the government overstay charges before being allowed to leave.

If the security situation worsens or if specific threats affecting the safety of U.S. citizens are discovered, the Embassy will make this information available through the U.S. Embassy website and by messages communicated through our warden system. Emergency Messages for U.S. Citizens in Sudan can be found online at:
http://sudan.usembassy.gov/warden_messages.html.

U.S. citizens living or traveling in Sudan should register their presence in the country through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program or "STEP" (<https://step.state.gov/step/>). By registering, U. S. citizens will be included in the Embassy's warden e-mail message distribution list.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Being aware of one's surroundings has been a time-tested method to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Travelers should maintain a low profile and avoid establishing patterns and predictability.

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Travelers must be prepared to pay cash for all purchases. Major credit cards cannot be used due to U.S. sanctions. Sudan has no international ATMs. Local ATMs draw on local banks only. U.S. currency issued prior to 2006 is generally not accepted. Travelers often experience difficulty transferring cash into the country, and travelers carrying large amounts of U.S. currency have been detained. Western Union operates in Khartoum.

The U.S. Embassy recommends that all U.S. citizens maintain safe haven plans and plans to evacuate the country on short notice should the situation warrant.

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