



South Africa 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Financial Security; Burglary; Murder; Carjacking; Rape/Sexual Violence; Information Security; Fraud; Cyber; Riots/Civil Unrest; Assassinations; Racial Violence/Xenophobia; Extreme heat/drought; Oil & Energy; Maritime; Counterfeiting; Drug Trafficking; Bribery; Disease Outbreak

Africa > South Africa; Africa > South Africa > Cape Town; Africa > South Africa > Durban; Africa > South Africa > Johannesburg; Africa > South Africa > Pretoria

6/7/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Critical

Crime Threats

Crime is a key concern for the South Africa government and for U.S. government employees and visitors. Crime is notable for: 1) the level of violence associated with personal/property crimes, as criminals do not hesitate to use lethal weapons; and 2) the occurrence of crimes across all metropolitan areas regardless of the socio-economic status of a particular neighborhood.

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Crimes range from petty muggings to ATM scams to armed residential home invasions and murder. These crimes occur with frequency and in all neighborhoods. U.S. citizens are not specifically targeted, but are frequently victims of a wide range of crimes.

Violent, confrontational crime -- home invasion robberies, burglaries, carjackings, street muggings, smash-and-grabs, organized attacks on commercial/retail centers (shopping malls and outlets), ATM bombings, attacks on cash-in-transit vehicles/personnel (armored car/personnel) -- is a major concern. The South African Police Service (SAPS) has recently released April 2014 – March 2015 crime statistics for all major crimes.

Of particular concern are home invasion robberies. These crimes are often violent and can occur at any time of day. In many cases, criminals prefer to attack when the occupants are home or arriving/leaving the premises because the residential alarm is off and the occupants can identify where valuables are kept. Perhaps the most vulnerable residential chokepoint is the driveway entrance gate. Criminals often attack when victims are waiting for the vehicle gate to open/close. According to the SAPS, the majority of carjackings occur when the victim arrives at home and pulls into the driveway; the carjackers pull up behind the victim to block an escape path. Victims who resist or fail to comply with demands may be killed or seriously injured. In many scenarios, robbers force the victim into the house, rob the house of its valuables, and carjack the vehicle.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of rape in the world. While not specifically targeted, foreigners are victims.

Financial and identity theft crimes, including debit/credit card and advance-fee scams, are common. Most businesses (gas stations, restaurants) have portable credit card machines that

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are brought to the customer to allow them to swipe their card. Despite these safeguards, cards are frequently cloned, resulting in fraudulent charges. ATM fraud includes the placement of a skimming device on the ATM itself or the ruse of a “helpful citizen” who offers to assist. Criminals also bomb ATMs, although this usually occurs during the early morning hours in remote locations.

Cybersecurity Issues

The South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) released a draft Cybercrimes and Cybersecurity Bill in August 2015. According to the DoJ&CD, the aim of the bill is to provide “a coherent and integrated cybersecurity legislative framework to address various shortcomings which exist in dealing with cybercrime and cybersecurity in South Africa.” In October 2015, the government launched the National Cybersecurity Hub to combat cyber crime by collaborating with the private sector and civil society on cyber security-related incidents in South Africa. According to the South African Minister of Telecommunications, in 2013 “South Africa was number three in the world in phishing incidents.” The National Cyber Security Hub at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) reported that in October 2015 alone, 6,000 attempted cyber attacks against South African critical infrastructure, Internet service providers, and businesses were detected, with 2,000 of those attacks against critical infrastructure sites. Of those 6,000 cyber attacks over half were related to phishing incidents.

Identity theft remains a significant concern due to several contributing factors: a strong infrastructure of money wire services, readily available Internet, prepaid cell phones, high levels of corruption in many companies and government agencies, and lack of police resources/expertise to combat this type of crime. The U.S. Mission has worked with U.S. citizens who reported their mail was opened, re-routed, or tampered with at the local post office, and later learned the perpetrators assumed their identity. Others have reported that

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their U.S. passport biographical page was photocopied at hotels during their travels in Africa (standard operating procedure), was altered (photo shopped), and used in romance, standard traveler, or tax scams against South African and U.S. citizens.

Other Areas of Concern

Visitors are advised to avoid township neighborhoods and central business districts (CBDs), particularly after dark unless traveling with an organized tour group or someone who knows the area. Visitors should increase their level of awareness in these areas during daylight, due to high crime rates and spontaneous protests often involving road blocks and demonstrators burning tires/throwing rocks and other projectiles.

U.S. Consulate General Durban prohibits employees from going to the Japanese Gardens at Durban North due to high crime.

Questions or concerns regarding a specific area can be directed to the Regional Security Offices in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, or Durban.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

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Traffic moves on the left side, and steering wheels are on the right side. There are also different “rules of the road.” Vehicles pass on either side or travel at varying speeds (some very fast, others very slow) in all lanes. It is common to see older, poorly-maintained vehicles breaking down and creating road hazards. Drivers must be vigilant when driving on the highway, particularly at night. The Embassy and Consulates prohibit employees from traveling after dark outside of major metropolitan areas.

Texting/talking on a cell phone without a hands-free device while driving is a violation of law and can result in heavy fines, the impoundment of your cell phone, or the solicitation of a bribe by an errant police officer.

While the highway system and toll roads are generally in good condition, automobile accidents are the highest single risk to drivers and pedestrians. This is due to dangerous driving practices, speeding, alcohol abuse, slow and un-roadworthy vehicles, the condition of the road surfaces, and the frequent presence of pedestrians/animals in the road outside of large cities. South Africa has a high rate of fatal traffic accidents; according to the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), there were more than 4,500 road fatalities between April 2014 and March 2015.

Toll roads have emergency call boxes similar to those in the U.S. Secondary roads are often in poor condition and frequently marked by potholes. Highway signage can be inconsistent. This is more evident when driving on secondary and tertiary roads. Highway lighting is limited outside major cities and towns. Road construction is often poorly marked. Many construction zones outside metropolitan areas use a “Stop-and-Go” approach where one lane is

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completely closed and the adjacent lane is used as a one-way, alternating between directions.

Roadway policing mainly consists of speed traps and checkpoints where officers check for mechanical malfunctions, operator compliance with license restrictions, and alcohol consumption. The legal blood alcohol limit is .05 percent and is strictly enforced. When stopped at a checkpoint, individuals may be required to provide a valid driver's license. Some foreign drivers have been stopped by police and informed that their foreign driver's license is not valid in South Africa, in an attempt to secure a bribe. Foreign driver's licenses, in English or with an attached translation, are valid for six months. International driver's licenses are valid and accepted for the duration of the license.

Other common road-related crimes include smash-and-grab robberies. A robber smashes a side vehicle window to grab what is easily accessible (purse, cell phone) when a motorist is stopped in traffic, at a stop light, or in congestion. Once the item is snatched, the robber flees (often into nearby townships where it is dangerous to pursue). These crimes can occur anywhere but most are at major intersections and at highway off-ramps. The media has reported cases where bricks or rocks were dropped from overhead bridges onto passing cars below, causing severe damage to the vehicle and often serious injuries, including the possibility of death, to the occupants.

Criminals may target vehicles on the highways but seldom during daylight hours. Gangs will place debris in the road and wait for a vehicle to stop after hitting the object. In another frequent scenario, an individual (or several working together) may have a vehicle on the side of the road with an apparent mechanical problem attempting to flag down passing traffic for help. When a passerby stops to assist or to inspect damage, the driver is robbed of valuables and sometimes his/her car is stolen or s/he is assaulted. If a vehicle is on the side of the road, do not stop to render assistance. Instead, call 10-111 (nationwide emergency police number)

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to report the vehicle's location so that the authorities can respond.

Motorists should be aware of their general geographic location and travel with a South African road atlas and a GPS navigation system. Some GPS systems may route motorists through dangerous neighborhoods/townships and/or on remote/unsafe rural roads. Motorists should always travel with a fully charged cell phone and a mobile charger. Motorists should have emergency telephone numbers for the South African Automobile Association (AA), which recognizes the American Automobile Associations (AAA) membership, or other roadside assistance companies. AA and other roadside assistance companies can provide armed response units that will wait with motorists until the vehicle is repaired or towed to a service center.

As a pedestrian, take extreme care when crossing streets. Collisions involving vehicles and pedestrians are common. Drivers are often aggressive toward pedestrians and fail to yield the right-of-way, even in marked crosswalks.

Doors should be locked, no valuables should be left in plain view, and windows should be kept up. Remain a safe distance behind the vehicle ahead of you to allow space for avoidance maneuvers. Wait inside your vehicle on the street until the vehicle gate is open before pulling into a residence. This will provide you an escape route if confronted. Stay on main roads and keep to well-illuminated, public areas. If you think you are being followed, drive to the nearest safe area (any area that is populated or normally covered by security cameras). Use caution when traveling and be prepared with a full tank of fuel, spare tire, cell phone, water, and other supplies when traveling in rural areas.

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Public Transportation Conditions

U.S. Mission personnel are instructed not to use minibus taxis, to hail taxis from the street, or to hire taxis at a taxi stand. Public transportation accidents involving trains, buses, minibus taxis, and private cars are a regular occurrence. Minibus taxi drivers are often unlicensed and may drive erratically. In addition, minibus taxis and buses have been targeted by criminal elements for hijacking and robbery. Often, the safety and security standards on public transportation systems, especially in urban areas and townships, are not on par with U.S. standards. The use of individual metered taxis dispatched from established taxi companies, hotel taxis, and tour buses is recommended.

U.S. Mission personnel are also instructed not to use Metrorail service. Despite a 2004 Constitutional Court order stating that Metrorail has an obligation to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to provide for the security of rail commuters; violent crime, accidents, and disgruntled passengers acting out is not uncommon. The long-distance rail service Shosholozza Meyl; the suburban rapid rail service Gautrain; luxury rail services, such as Shosholozza Meyl Premier Classe, Blue Train and Rovos Rail are generally safe and reliable, though mechanical problems and criminal incidents do sometimes occur.

When transportation network companies (TNCs) are used, only those with a dispatch application that provides vehicle description, license plate number, and the driver's name, picture, user rating, and the ability to share trip information, are recommended. The user should verify the information provided by the company, such as the vehicle make/model, license plate number, and driver's name/picture, prior to entering the vehicle. TNCs should not be used to travel outside major metropolitan areas or previously disadvantaged areas.

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Aviation/Airport Conditions

Pilferage of luggage at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg occurs, particularly at the passenger pick-up area outside the arrivals terminal, where criminals may pose as Good Samaritans offering to assist with luggage. Airline check-in staff remind travelers not to place valuables in their luggage.

Other Travel Conditions

There have been numerous incidents in which fake police officers (especially near OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and the connecting freeway to Pretoria) pull over vehicles to rob passengers at gunpoint. These are referred to as “Blue Light” robberies. Many victims report they had just withdrawn large sums of money from ATMs or exchanged money at a foreign exchange booth inside the airport terminal. In these cases, observers inside the terminals watch for such transactions. They then call the criminals to pass on information about the victim’s departure from the airport, and the make, model, and license plate number of the vehicle. If the vehicle stops for these police imposters, the occupants are robbed at gunpoint of their valuables. This is not limited to the OR Tambo International Airport area, as there have been reports elsewhere. These fake police officers use unmarked vehicles with a police light in the dashboard and flash what appears to be a “badge” to pull over vehicles. More disturbing, these fake police officers more often use modified fake, but high quality, “marked police vehicles” and wear a police uniform. If forced to pull over by a police vehicle (marked or unmarked), turn on your emergency blinkers and drive slowly to a secure, well-illuminated area.

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Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

On September 8, 2015, Mission South Africa issued a Security Message to U.S. citizens regarding a terrorist threat to U.S. interests in South Africa. South Africa is an important transit and facilitation point for global extremists. Although there has been no indication that operational cells are present, a nexus for recruiting, funding, and safe haven for international terrorists does exist.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

In a Pew Research Center study released in June 2015, 74 percent of respondents had a favorable view of the U.S., but there are occasionally remarks made by anti-capitalism groups that the U.S. is to blame for unemployment and other inequalities.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

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After more than 20 years of democratic rule since the end of apartheid, the government maintains a vibrant free society and a market-based economy. Despite inequality in income and educational opportunity, persistent poverty, a severe HIV/AIDS pandemic and violent crime, South Africa remains a successful multiparty democratic society; it boasts a robust civil society and a dynamic free press. South Africa has a stable, democratic government, but political violence has increased in recent years.

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) has suffered from more than 60 politically-motivated killings of ANC, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and National Freedom Party (NFP) members since 2011. In the run-up to the 2014 general elections, most incidents happened in areas considered hot spots, including KwaMashu hostel, Glebe Hostel, Estcourt, eThekweni, and parts of Zululand. Many victims were members of the IFP and NFP. There have been some arrests but very few convictions. Political violence is not new to KZN and often occurs in the run-up to elections, reflecting competition for power and economic gain. Recently, inter-party violence has been limited to the IFP and its NFP offshoot. The violence is targeted at local politicians, usually in townships and in greater Durban, rather than U.S. citizens.

Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

Labor strikes and protests occur frequently and can be violent and disruptive. U.S. citizens are advised to avoid strikes and protests, given frequency at which these turn violent. Gauteng Province is the political and economic capital and typically experiences more labor unrest than

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other provinces. Labor unions carry substantial political clout and can mobilize thousands of people. Typical protest activities include blocking major thoroughfares between Johannesburg and Pretoria (termed a “go slow”) by vehicles, or gridlocking Johannesburg’s Central Business District (CBD) with sheer numbers of protestors. Labor unrest affects mining, farming, retail, civil service, public transportation, private trucking, and manufacturing sectors.

Unlicensed protests have led to property destruction and assaults. Unannounced large-scale wildcat strikes have occurred in the mining sector and in agricultural areas in the Western Cape in recent years. These wildcat strikes involved thousands and led to numerous deaths, injuries, and extensive property damage.

Although not connected to industrial action, another form of protest is “service delivery protests,” which often flare-up in neighborhoods when water, electricity, or other public utilities are cut off. These protests often result in burning tires, stoning vehicles, and blocking roads. According to the 2014-15 SAPS report, there were 12,451 peaceful protests, and an additional 2,289 illegal, violent demonstrations. These 14,740 protests marked an increase over the 13,508 from 2013-14. SAPS noted the elevated number of protests forced them to divert resources from other police activities.

While protests are generally peaceful, they can involve some level of violence. Avoid confrontations with local residents. Avoid areas where political gatherings are taking place. Pay attention to local media reports on the location(s) of proposed demonstrations. Protests and demonstrations are not spectator events. SAPS generally meets protests with non-lethal crowd control measures but have responded with violence. While protests are legally permitted, police are generally quick to deter demonstrations that do not have appropriate municipal approval.

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KZN is a frequent host to ANC political rallies and large gatherings that sometimes disrupt the city. Most protests, marches, and rallies pass in front of the building housing the U.S. Consulate General and across the street in front of Durban's City Hall, preventing Consulate staff/visitors from accessing/departing the building. There were over a dozen such demonstrations in 2014. SAPS is usually called in to control traffic and demonstrators.

Protests by the military, police, private security industry, truckers, and the minibus/taxi industry have the most potential for violence.

Religious/Ethnic Violence

Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from other African countries who are perceived to be competing for jobs with South Africans are sometimes the target of attacks. These attacks are increasingly violent and mainly occur in the largest townships and in central business districts. The government attributes the attacks to high unemployment (the official unemployment rate is 24 percent, but experts believe it is closer to 40 percent). The government has challenges in addressing the root causes. Local law enforcement have been captured on video standing idly as shops are looted. As a result, foreigners working and living in urban areas feel helpless and are prone to resolve matters on their own, leading to further conflict and violence. In recent years, there have been several well-publicized fatal incidents involving mob attacks on citizens of other African countries. Perpetrators are seldom successfully prosecuted. In January 2015, the shooting of a young boy by a foreign-born shop owner led to several days of rioting in Soweto and other parts of Gauteng. There were also isolated incidents of violence near Durban and in Cape Town at the same time. The SAPS, with the support of the South African National Defense Forces, got the violence under control, in most cases within two

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days, but at least seven people were killed and more than 5,000 foreigners were displaced.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Since October 2015, South Africa has been feeling the impact of its worst drought since 1982, with severe water shortages across the country. KZN and Free State provinces were declared disaster areas, and northern Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces are under observation to follow suit. Gauteng province may impose water restrictions; Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Cape Town already have. According to media reports, “this year’s drought has been particularly severe, and has exposed weaknesses in the country’s water infrastructure. Reservoirs and dams have run down.” In some areas, tankers deliver fresh water but on an unreliable schedule. In January 2015, government officials considered one in ten municipal water systems to be “totally dysfunctional,” and of those working one in four had regular service disruptions of two or more days. Funding for long-term needed water projects is limited due mainly to a lagging economy. The IMF is projecting 0.7 percent economic growth for 2016.

During the rainy season, thunderstorms, lightning strikes, or water damage often disrupt power to alarm systems, traffic lights, and other electronic equipment. Adequate surge protectors should be used to protect computers and other electrical equipment.

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While visiting game parks and reserves, it is dangerous to leave your vehicle or be on foot, even in the presence of a guide. You should observe all local/park regulations and exercise appropriate caution in unfamiliar surroundings. Visitors have been seriously injured and killed by wild animals. Even in the most serene settings, wild animals present a threat to life and safety. If visiting the expansive coastline, be mindful of the possible presence of sharks when swimming or engaging in water sports. Accidents can occur when swimming in the ocean or walking/climbing on shore areas that are not designated lifeguard-patrolled beaches. Do not swim alone in isolated beach areas and do not dive into unknown bodies of water, as hidden rocks, fast-moving currents, or shallow depths can cause serious injury or death. Rip tides are common but unpredictable. On both public and private beaches be sure to swim in marked and guarded areas.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

Although the infrastructure is relatively stable, it is not without challenges. Consumer demands, insufficient power generation, and the theft of electrical wire and other equipment often interfere with the government-owned utilities' ability to deliver an uninterrupted power supply. South Africa's primary electricity supplier, Eskom, conducted 99 days of load-shedding (rolling blackouts) in 2015 to safeguard the electrical grid. Electricity outages have eased, as Eskom has brought new generation capacity on line and as the utility addresses overdue maintenance issues and upgrades infrastructure.

Telephone landlines are becoming more unreliable and difficult to maintain or replace. Copper wire is often stolen and is, therefore, scarce. Telephone systems are saturated, making it increasingly difficult to get new phone numbers and to have landlines installed or replaced.

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Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

The national, provincial, and local governments remain committed to combating the production and importation of counterfeit products and to enforcing intellectual property rights per World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments. However, the demand for name brand items at all socio-economic levels sustains the demand for counterfeit products (music, clothing, accessories). South Africa has made progress on counterfeit digital media through close cooperation between authorities and industry.

Importation of manufactured counterfeit products has been more difficult to stem. One manufacturer of a U.S. clothing brand in Durban is working with local authorities to remove Chinese-made products from the streets and to halt importation of these items. The inability to find the source of the counterfeit products has hampered local investigations. The U.S. Mission is in close contact with the South Africa Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) in combating counterfeiting and protecting intellectual property rights.

Personnel-Background Concerns

South Africa is one of the most progressive countries in the world in the protection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) rights, but it still faces a number of challenges. The post-apartheid Constitution outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the Constitutional Court (the equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court) ruled in 2005 that same-sex marriage is allowable. Parliament passed a law in 2006 allowing same-sex couples to marry. There have been no reports of official mistreatment or discrimination based on sexual orientation. Although the legal system protects LGBTI

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individuals, public attitudes are divergent. In a Pew Research Center study released in 2013, 61 percent of respondents said homosexuality should not be accepted by society, while just 32 percent said it should be accepted. Human rights groups reported the local LGBTI community, particularly in the townships, was subject to hate crimes, gender violence, and killings. There have been no reports of violence against U.S. citizens or tourists as a result of their sexual orientation, though tourists are frequently victims of violent crime. LGBTI travelers outside of major cities should exercise caution when visiting traditional communities, as they may be less accepting of public displays of affection or LGBTI culture than major cities and tourist destinations. For more detailed information about LGBTI rights, please review the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. For further information on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) travel, please read our LGBTI Travel Information page.

Drug-related Crimes

South Africa is an importer and exporter of drugs. It is the origin, transit point, and/or destination of many drug trafficking routes. International drug trafficking organizations are found in South Africa. Factors that attract legitimate businesses also appeal to organized crime. There are pockets of corruption within the government, but as a policy, law enforcement frequently collaborates with U.S. counterparts to target drug trafficking.

The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports South Africa as a leading country for cannabis seizures. While much cannabis is cultivated domestically, significant quantities are also grown in neighboring countries. Large seizures of compressed marijuana are frequently made at the OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and are generally destined for the UK.

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Cocaine, frequently originating from South America, is regularly seized at the OR Tambo International Airport. Cocaine trafficking is mostly controlled by Nigerian syndicates that have recruiters placed in South Africa and facilitators throughout South America. Recent trends indicate that Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) from China and the Balkans have developed a significant presence in South Africa. In addition to importing narcotics directly into South Africa, DTOs ship drugs into Maputo, Mozambique, and then truck them into South Africa.

Heroin is also a drug of abuse in South Africa. There were several investigations where heroin was smuggled from Pakistan into South Africa and onward into the U.S. According to a United Nations (UN) study, most of the heroin trafficked into South Africa is intended for domestic consumption.

SAPS reports an increase in the number of clandestine drug manufacturing laboratories. These labs produce synthetic drugs (methamphetamine (known locally as "tick")) largely for the domestic market. While there is limited knowledge of narcotics trafficking financing terrorist activities.

Kidnapping Threat

Kidnap-for-ransom is not a concern. U.S. citizens have not been the target of kidnap for political gain. There have been a few cases of U.S. citizens seeking business opportunities being abducted by criminals misrepresenting themselves as legitimate businesspersons. Scam artists who purported to be engaged in legitimate business enterprises have lured

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unsuspecting victims with promises of lucrative business deals. In one instance, the victim arrived in South Africa and met his "business contact," the victim was abducted and ransomed for safe return. These abductions are motivated purely by greed and do not target U.S. citizens specifically.

Police Response

South African Police Service (SAPS) continues to address poor response time and officer indifference with an effort to improve their sector policing capabilities in many neighborhoods. While SAPS attempts to respond to emergency residential calls and other developing crimes, real improvements are still forthcoming. Property crimes are a lower priority. Police response may take 2-3 days after a break-in to respond or take a report.

Community watch groups are increasing slowly. They compliment SAPS' efforts to detect/deter crime and provide improved response to calls of a serious nature. Though there has been an improvement in community policing, police are mistrusted and seen as corrupt.

Unauthorized photography of certain sites (government buildings, similar locations) might result in fines/arrest. 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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While corruption exists, complaints of street level shakedowns for money or similar forms of harassment are uncommon among the U.S. expatriate community. One in three South Africans reports to having paid a bribe to police officers (or police impersonators) once they engaged them for assistance. On occasion, motorists have been informed they can pay a fine directly to the officer after being caught in a speed trap or at a road-worthy checkpoint. If this occurs, the best course of action is to advise the officer to provide a citation and the fine will be paid at a police station.

U.S. citizens who are arrested or detained by SAPS or feel they are being harassed can contact American Citizen Services at:

U.S. Consulate General – Johannesburg

1 Sandton Drive, Sandton, 2146

Telephone: 011-290-3000

Afterhours emergency assistance: 079-111-1684

E-mail: ACSJohannesburg@state.gov

U.S. Consulate General – Cape Town

2 Reddam Avenue, Westlake 7945

Telephone: 021-702-7300

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Afterhours emergency assistance: 079-111-0391

E-mail: ConsularCapeTown@state.gov

U.S. Consulate General – Durban

Delta Towers, 31st floor

303 Dr. Pixley kaSeme Street, Durban 4001

Telephone: 031-305-7600

Afterhours emergency assistance: 079-111-1445

E-mail: ConsularDurban@state.gov

Crime Victim Assistance

The national police emergency number is: 10-111 or 112 from a mobile phone.

Ambulance is either 10177 from any phone or 112 from a mobile phone.

Police/Security Agencies

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There are two police agencies. The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) deals with traffic control and the South African Police Service (SAPS) deals with criminal investigations and regular law enforcement duties.

For residential/commercial properties in affluent neighborhoods, the use of private security companies is normal for first response to a crime in progress. These private companies generally have 1-2 armed officers in response vehicles and patrol neighborhoods throughout the day. While more affluent areas are protected by roving security reaction units with the responsibility of responding to violent crimes, communities have experienced little/no success in this effort.

Medical Emergencies

The private health care sector ranks among the best in the world. Counterfeit medication is not a significant problem in South Africa, but the lack of effective border controls, well-organized criminal syndicates controlling these illicit practices, and the tremendous amount of proceeds they generate means counterfeit medications may become a challenge. These illicit practices affect all levels of society, although the poor are the primary targets. To avoid becoming a victim, be familiar with the physical characteristics -- the color, shape, printing, and form of medication/packaging; and the color, shape, and texture of the actual medication -- of your medications. If in doubt, immediately return the medication and/or report to SAPS or local authorities.

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Ground Ambulance Services

NetCare 911: 082 911 (Private, nationwide)

ER 24: 084 124 (Private, nationwide)

The nationwide emergency number for an ambulance is: 10-177

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Three private health corporations, NetCare, Mediclinic, and Life Hospitals, dominate the private health care system in South Africa. Each corporation owns approximately 60 hospitals throughout the country. Nearly every medium-sized city, including those near remote game parks, has a private hospital operated by at least one of these corporations. The more remote hospitals provide less specialized care, but all have abilities to stabilize very ill/injured patients until transferred to a larger medical center. The three corporation's websites have excellent search tools to find a hospital, clinic, or doctor anywhere in South Africa.

JOHANNESBURG (larger private hospitals, multiple others available)

Milpark Hospital – NetCare

9 Guild Rd, Partown West, Johannesburg 2193

Tel: +27 (11) 480-5600, Emergency: +27 (11) 480-5917

Morningside Medi-Clinic

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Cnr Rivonia and Hills Rd, Morningside, Johannesburg 2057

Tel: +27 (11) 282-5000, Emergency: +27 (11) 282-5126/5127

Sandton Medi-Clinic

Cnr Main Rd and Peter Place, Bryanston, Johannesburg 2021

Tel: +29 (11) 709-2000, Emergency: +27 (11) 706-7710/7711

PRETORIA (larger private hospitals, multiple others available)

Unitas Hospital – Netcare

Clifton Avenue, Lyttelton, Centurion 0140

Tel: +27 (12) 677 8000

Pretoria East – NetCare

Corner of Garsfontein & Netcare Roads, Moreleta Park

Tel: + 27 (12) 422 2300

Life Wilgers Hospital

Denneboom Rd, Wilgers Ext14, Pretoria 0040

Tel: +27 (12) 807-8100

Kloof Hospital Medi-Clinic

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511 Jochemus St, Erasmuskloof X3, Pretoria 0083

Tel: +27 (12) 367-4000, Emergency: +27 (12) 367-4076

CAPE TOWN (larger private hospitals, multiple others available)

Life Vincent Pallotti Hospital

Alexandra Road, Pinelands, Cape Town 7405

Tel: +27 (21) 506-5111

Christiaan Barnard Memorial- NetCare

Cnr Long Market and Loop Street, City Centre

Tel: +27 (21) 480-6111, +27 (21) 424-4228

Constantiaberg Mediclinic Hospital

Burnham Road off Gabriel and Amin Streets

Tel: +27 (21) 799-2911, +27 (21) 797-1107

Claremont Hospital

Main Road, Claremont

Tel: +27 (21) 670-4300, +27 (21) 671-3315

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DURBAN (larger private hospitals, multiple others available)

St Augustine's Hospital – NetCare

107 Chelmsford Rd, Berea, Durban 4001

Tel: +27 (31) 268-5000, Emergency: +27 (31) 268-5030

Umhlanga Rocks Hospital – NetCare

323 Umhlanga Rocks Drive, Umhlanga Rocks, Durban 4320

Tel: +27 (31) 560-5500, Emergency: +27 (31) 560-5607/5612

Entanbeni Hospital – Life Healthcare

148 South Ridge Rd, Berea, Durban 4000

Tel: +27 (31) 204-1300, Emergency: +27 (31) 204-1377

Available Air Ambulance Services

International SOS

Tel: +27 (11) 541-1100 or +27 (11) 541-1300

NetCare 911

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Tel: 082 911 or +27 (10) 209 8392

Recommended Insurance Posture

U.S. government employees in Africa are often evacuated to South Africa for medical treatment. Travelers are encouraged to purchase traveler/medical evacuation insurance policies. U.S. health insurance is usually not accepted at any medical facility in South Africa. It is common that a foreigner without local health insurance may have to pay for medical services in advance with cash or a major credit card.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

HIV/AIDS remain major public health concerns. Due to South Africa's high HIV infection rate, the U.S. government advises all personnel/visitors to seek immediate medical assistance in the event of a sexual assault, high-risk sexual encounter, or blood-borne injury.

Travelers entering South Africa from World Health Organization (WHO) yellow fever designated countries are required to present their current and valid "International Certificate of Vaccination" record (commonly called a "yellow card") as approved by the WHO or a statement of medical exemption (also located on the same "yellow card"). Yellow fever vaccination must have been administered at least 10 days prior to a traveler's arrival in accordance with WHO regulations. Immigration inspectors do not generally accept letters, scans, copies, or faxes regarding prior yellow fever vaccination. This requirement is imposed

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on travelers flying to South Africa via any WHO-designated yellow fever country, even if the plane makes an unscheduled landing in a yellow fever country. Passengers in transit in Senegal and Ghana that do not leave the aircraft do not require a yellow fever certificate. While this requirement may not be consistently applied, travelers who cannot present an original, valid “yellow card” risk being refused entry. Yellow fever vaccinations are not administered at ports of entry. A yellow fever vaccination is valid for ten years.

Malaria does exist in the low elevations areas in the northeast, including Kruger National Park and the border with Mozambique. Individuals traveling to these areas are advised to consult their medical provider or a travel medicine clinic on prophylactic malaria medications and take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

South Africa has the world’s third highest rates of tuberculosis (TB), behind India and China, with WHO statistics giving an estimated incidence of 500,000 cases of active TB in 2011. Therefore, about one percent of the population develops active TB each year. The incidence has increased by 400 percent over the past 15 years. TB continues to be the leading cause of death in South Africa. WHO gives a figure of 25,000 deaths from TB in South Africa in 2013, but this excludes those people who had both TB and HIV infection when they died.

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

OSAC Country Council Information

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South Africa's OSAC Country Council is based in Johannesburg. The RSO in Pretoria and Johannesburg co-chair a vibrant, proactive Country Council with over 65 members to include major U.S. companies in a variety of industries. The Country Council meets monthly throughout Johannesburg. Both RSOs (Pretoria and Johannesburg) attend all meetings to engage in roundtable discussions. The Country Council takes an active role on all issues of crime and security to include outreach to public officials for speaking engagements and training seminars. The U.S. Consulate General Cape Town continues to develop and cultivate a nascent Country Council to includes 20 members of U.S. companies. Please contact the RSO at the U.S. Consulate General Cape Town if you are interested in participating or need more information.

Regional Security Offices (RSO):

Pretoria: Tel: +27 (12) 431-4099, email: DS_RSO_Pretoria@state.gov

Johannesburg: Tel: +27 (11) 290-3426, email: DS_RSOJohannesburg@state.gov

Cape Town: Tel: +27 (21) 702-7438, email: DS_RSO_CapeTown@state.gov

To reach the OSAC Africa team, please email OSACAF@state.gov.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

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877 Pretorius St, Arcadia 0083, Pretoria

Embassy and Consulate General hours of operation are 0745 to 1700 (M-Th) and 0745 to 1245 (F)

Embassy Contact Numbers

Telephone: +27 (12) 431-4000

MSG Post 1: +27 (12) 431-4169 (After Hours)

Regional Security Office: +27 (12) 431-4099

Email: DS_RSO_Pretoria@state.gov

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

Nearby Posts

Consulate Johannesburg: <https://za.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/johannesburg/>

Consulate Cape Town: <https://za.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/capetown/>

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Consulate Durban: <https://za.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/durban/>

Embassy Guidance

The Consular Information Sheet for South Africa

It is recommended that any traveler register with the U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

Be wary of the “helpful” citizen who offers to assist you with an ATM transaction, seeing that you are having trouble. When the machine does not work (because it has been purposely disabled), the helpful citizen clones your ATM card with a small reader and walks off with your PIN. Pick ATMs carefully, and politely refuse any “help.” It is highly recommended that you thoroughly inspect any ATM for suspicious attachments/devices. Never allow anyone to provide assistance and never give out PIN codes. If you need to use an ATM, use one in a controlled area (shopping mall, hotel). Avoid ATMs on the street since criminals will attempt to “assist” you during your transaction. Credit/debit card fraud is frequent. Only use cards in reputable establishments. In order to prevent “card skimming,” physically watch your card

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when processed (swiped). Check your credit/debit card account for any unauthorized purchases.

Credit card scams are also prevalent. Residents and travelers should ensure that credit cards are not taken to a back room for processing. Always complete credit card transaction(s) with the establishment's employee in one's presence.

Romance scams are a growing problem with fake romantic relationships or engagements via the Internet to lure victims into sending money to support education, health, immigration, or job-related problems.

An advanced-fee scheme occurs when the victim pays money to someone in anticipation of receiving something of greater value (a loan, contract, investment, inheritance, gift) and then receives little/nothing in return. Victims have lost large sums of money to these scams. Upon receipt of a suspected advanced-fee scheme solicitation, please visit the FBI common fraud schemes website before providing any personal/financial details or making a financial commitment. Additional financial scam information is available at the Department of State international financial scams website.

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Be aware of your surroundings. Your vigilance may convince a would-be attacker to find an easier target. Travel in groups, whenever possible, and minimize your movements after dark.

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If you believe you are in danger, leave the area immediately and go to an illuminated, populated location to seek help.

Maintain a low profile and do not flash cash or wear expensive jewelry. Travelers should safeguard their passport, wallet, and other valuables and know where these possessions are at all times. Travelers should use a safe and or reception desk lock box at hotels for all valuables. Keep photocopies of your passport and other identity documents on your person or separate from the originals and keep the originals locked up in the hotel safe.

If confronted by an armed individual, cooperate. Resistance or hesitation on the part of the victim can result in death or serious injury. Keep your hands visible and follow instructions carefully. Surrender items requested; your things can be replaced; your safety and your life cannot.

Avoid armored vehicles (and their uniformed personnel), especially when they are making deposits or picking up cash receipts. They are frequent targets by well-armed gangs who are not afraid to use weapons, even in crowded public areas.

Measures to combat home invasions should include several layers of residential security (perimeter walls, electric fencing, loops on the electric fencing, alarms, motion detectors, grilles on windows/doors). Vehicle gates should also be equipped with anti-lift brackets, as criminals may use crowbars and pneumatic jacks to lift gates off their tracks.

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Residents may wish to consider purchasing residential generators for backup electricity.

Due to the extremely high rate of HIV/AIDS, anyone who is the victim of rape or sexual assault should seek immediate medical attention (prophylaxis against HIV and other STDs) and report the crime to the police.

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