



## Travel Warning: Venezuela

Crime; Riots/Civil Unrest; Murder

Western Hemisphere > Venezuela; Western Hemisphere > Venezuela > Caracas

7/7/2016

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens that violent crime in Venezuela is pervasive, both in the capital Caracas and throughout the country. Security restrictions on U.S. government personnel may restrict the services the Embassy can provide. All U.S. direct-hire personnel and their families assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Caracas are subject to an embassy movement policy which limits their travel abilities within Caracas and in other parts of the country for their safety and well-being. Country-wide shortages of food, water, medicine, electricity, and other basic goods have led to violence and looting. This replaces the Travel Warning issued on September 18, 2015.

Venezuela has one of the world's highest crime rates and, according to the non-governmental organization Venezuelan Violence Observatory, has the second highest homicide rate.

Violent crime - including murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, and carjacking - is endemic throughout the country. Drug traffickers and illegal armed groups are active in the Colombian border states of Zulia, Tachira, and Apure.

Armed robberies and street crime take place throughout Caracas and other cities, including in areas generally presumed safe and frequented by tourists. Heavily armed criminals are known to use grenades and assault rifles to commit crimes at banks, shopping malls, public transportation stations, and universities. Criminals may take advantage of power outages to target victims when lights and security alarms are nonfunctional.

Political rallies and demonstrations can occur with little notice, and are expected to occur with greater frequency in the coming months in Caracas and other regions throughout the country. Long lines to purchase basic goods are a common occurrence throughout the country and there have been reports of unrest and violence while customers wait, sometimes resulting in looted stores and blocked streets. These incidents elicit a strong police and security force

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response that can include the use of violence against the participants; several deaths have been reported during such protests.

Although Venezuela is a signatory to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the Venezuelan government sometimes fails to notify the U.S. Embassy when U.S. citizens are arrested, and/or delays or denies consular access to arrestees. In cases where individuals hold dual citizenship we are not guaranteed consular access to the detained individuals. Regardless, the U.S. Embassy makes it a priority to request access to U.S. citizens, but U.S. citizens cannot assume a consular officer will visit them within 24-72 hours of an arrest. For further information:

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Venezuela Specific Information.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

Contact the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela, located at Calle F con Calle Suapure, Lomas de Valle Arriba, Caracas at +[58] 212-975-6411, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is +[58] 0212-907-8400.

Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

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