



## Eritrea 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Assault; Murder; Rape/Sexual Violence; Aviation; Religious Terrorism; Political Violence; Earthquakes; Other; Counterfeiting; Surveillance; Financial Security; Disease Outbreak

Africa > Eritrea; Africa > Eritrea > Asmara

8/9/2016

### Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: High

### Crime Threats

Walking the streets of Asmara between 6am-10pm is generally safe. The downtown area of Asmara is generally populated with people from morning until midnight. As long as there are people on the street, and isolated areas are avoided, people can walk fairly freely. The Embassy is unaware of any major criminal activity aside from petty theft and harassment from emotionally disturbed persons. Asmara is a very active city during the night. Although crime is present, particularly at certain hours and in certain locations, Asmara is generally safer than many capital cities around the world.

Obtaining official statistics on crime in Asmara is difficult. Most of the Embassy's reports regarding specific crimes originate from other diplomatic missions, international organizations,

---

*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.*



and foreign business expats with whom U.S. diplomats share a cordial relationship. The Eritrean Police Service reported that crimes were reduced by 16 percent in 2015 during their annual assessment meeting. This meeting is regularly conducted at the end of the year and is attended by the Head of Eritrean Police and Security Forces, Eritrean Police Commissioner, and representatives from the Zobas [districts], divisions, units, and sections. During the annual assessment meeting, the Commissioner reported that more than 4,000 people were charged and given sentences for a variety of offenses over the year.

Crime is generally higher in the early morning hours and in areas with high bar/club concentrations (i.e., Expo Center, Downtown). Some bars stay open until 5am. It is not uncommon on the weekends for 2-3 disturbances/fights to occur, and youth gangs are indiscriminate of who they target. Women walking alone during these hours are particular vulnerable. The Embassy has received reports of Eritreans being assaulted and robbed while walking along the streets late at night. In an extreme case in 2014, a government official was assaulted on the street, robbed, and later died of his injuries.

Crimes also tend to be higher during summer when a large number of Eritreans from the Diaspora come home and during the Christmas/New Year holiday season. In June, when schools are about to close for the summer, instances of group fighting, bar brawls, and hooliganism tends to rise. Crimes tend to be lower from April-June 20 (Martyr's Day) when security is tight due to May 24th Independence Day celebrations.

On 4-5 occasions in 2015, intoxicated persons approached the residential guards at U.S. government-leased residences in a hostile manner, generally as result of intoxication.

---

*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.*



Pickpockets and purse/bag snatchers are also a cause of concern. Although previously rare, women are increasingly found to be involved with such thefts, which usually occur in crowded areas like bus stops, stadium, movie theaters, market places, and even places of worship.

Emotionally disturbed people have been known to assault Eritreans and foreigners alike. An Embassy employee in the summer of 2014 was hit with a broom stick by an emotionally disturbed person. The Embassy is also aware of other incidents of Eritreans being assaulted by emotionally disturbed people.

While homicides do occur, they are more often committed by known individuals, sometimes as a result of land disputes, crimes of passions, and domestic issues. However, the occasional homicide has occurred as the result of an assault or robbery against strangers. These incidents are generally a result of "crimes of opportunity," occurring in the early morning hours. The Embassy has no specific knowledge of homicide or sexual assault being committed against persons in the expatriate or diplomatic community.

Sexual assaults are usually committed by individuals known to the victim or in situations where the use of drugs/alcohol plays a factor (late nights around bars).

Financial scams are rare. Eritrea lacks ATMs and is virtually a cash-only economy. Very few businesses accept credit cards.

Vehicle break-ins are common, but vehicle theft occurs rarely. Incidents of stolen vehicles are usually isolated to joy-riding. In 2015, the Embassy was alerted to three incidents of vehicle

---

*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.*



theft in Asmara, although no employees of the Embassy were personally victims of vehicle theft.

Residential crime ebbs and flow. In late 2014, there were a number of reported break-ins and burglaries of expatriate residences; however, these incidents (at least as they relate to the expat community) seemed to have subsided.

#### Areas of Concern

The Embassy advises people to not venture onto isolated streets late at night so as to avoid encounters with youth gangs, intoxicated, and emotionally disturbed persons.

In 2006, the government issued a decree restricting the travel of foreigners outside of Asmara. While in 2015, almost all requests to travel to Keren, Mendefera, and Massawa have been granted, access is not guaranteed. Travel permits are very specific and do not allow for side trips/deviations. Religious and other significant sites have to be specifically requested. In 2014, two teachers at the International School were granted permits to visit Keren. While visiting a monastery outside Keren, they were detained by local police because their permits did not include the monastery. In February 2015, Embassy personnel on an area familiarization trip to Massawa were rejected entry at the Port of Massawa and the Massawa Airport for failure to have specific permits for access. The Travel Warning underscores that traveling outside of areas expressly provided for in a travel permit puts the traveler at risk.

---

*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

Asmara is situated on a plateau, and driving is challenging. The roads leading to the city are dangerously steep, curving, and narrow, with most in poor condition, with minimal/no guard rails. Roads are frequently littered with fallen rocks and debris.

Road rules are often not observed, and it is not uncommon to find vehicles stopped in active traffic lanes. There were 100,000 traffic rule violations in 2015, according to police reports. There were 4,612 accidents that resulted in 357 deaths and 2,000 injuries. These accidents resulted in 98,000,000 Nakfa worth of property damage. However, the police said there was a 17 percent reduction of accidents in 2015 compared to 2014. The causes for vehicular accidents include: speeding, driving under influence, not giving priority, non-observing of traffic rules, and bad road/vehicle conditions. Trucks hauling products from Massawa are sometimes not well-maintained, due to the expense and lack of spare parts. Thus, people tend to improvise repairs. They travel on precarious roads where fog and haphazard driving result in a number of fatalities each year. Defensive driving is a must.

The biggest hazard is non-vehicular traffic in the roadway (pedestrians, persons in wheelchairs, bicycles, donkey carts). Pedestrians and bicyclists are a particular hazard because they tend to disregard vehicular traffic. Many people wear earphones and are not cognizant or situationally-aware of road hazards. Bicyclist may unexpectedly turn in front of drivers or end up on the side of a vehicle at intersections, which is dangerous when making a right turn. Almost no bicyclists use reflective gear/lights, even at night. There are also an extremely large number of children (age 5+) in the streets going and coming from school or

---

*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.*



playing soccer. Children are most visibly present during the summer (end of June-beginning of September) because schools are generally out.

An added complication to driving is the road condition. The main roads in Asmara are fairly good; however, side roads are not well-maintained and often contain significant potholes. A number of roads, particularly in residential areas, are unimproved, dirt roads. As of early 2016, the Filfil Road (Asmara-Massawa), is practically unpassable due to multiple wash-out conditions and large mountain debris in the road.

Driving at night is especially dangerous, as frequent power outages leave many streets dark. Pedestrians are encouraged to be extremely vigilant at night and always carry a flashlight. Travel outside of the city is not advised after dark or under less-than-ideal weather conditions. Thick fog is common during certain times of the year.

Asmara law enforcement regularly maintains a police presence at various intersections via foot patrol and in police vehicles. They randomly conduct sobriety and driver's license checkpoints. Sobriety checkpoints are often given on the spot, with a more thorough examination at a local police precinct. The legal alcohol limit is 0.08 percent.

The Embassy recommends using vehicle alarms and other visual deterrents (steering wheel locks).

## Public Transportation Conditions

---

*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.*



While many Eritreans rely on the local bus service, the Embassy does not recommend the use of public buses for foreigners due to severe overcrowding and high probability of pickpocketing.

Taxi cabs are safe and dependable; however, people are encouraged to negotiate the price in advance. Taxi cabs also customarily pick up multiple passengers. If you do not want this, advise the cab driver in advance. The cost for a non-shared taxi will be 10 times the normal fare.

#### Aviation/Airport Conditions

A number of airlines currently fly into Eritrea. The Embassy does not utilize Sudan Airways due to unreliability.

Security at the Asmara International Airport can be unpredictable. While the airport does show signs of due diligence in security, screening, and identification verification, the use of national service conscripts generally results in the lack of efficiency and consistency in their job performance. During the West Africa Ebola scare in late 2014, the airport did screen and question the prior destination of incoming travelers. However, persons manning passport control are often inexperienced. It is not uncommon to have a number of people check your passport upon arrival/departure. It may take up to an hour to get through incoming passport control. Foreign travelers may have their passport and entry documents heavily scrutinized. Airport personnel heavily screen personal effects coming into Eritrea to discourage individuals

---

*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.*



from importing bulk items for resale. GPS devices and satellite phones are prohibited and are subject to confiscation. Eritreans departing are required to have exit visas. Travelers are not fingerprinted nor are photographs taken. Airport security lacks technology to detect fraudulent documents.

## **Terrorism Threat**

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

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

There are known opposition and separatist groups that operate along the border areas. Most of these groups are focused on small-scale attacks against the government (military outposts, military vehicles, economic enterprises that provide currency for the government). Foreigners who wander into those areas are subject to being targeted. Organizations like Eritrean Islamic Jihad ("Islamic Salvation Movement"), oppose the government, have overall motives of establishing a Caliphate in the Horn of Africa, and would likely be a threat to U.S./Western interests. With the lack of information sharing and travel restrictions, it is difficult to assess the capability of these groups to conduct operations in Eritrea. There have been no known acts of terrorism in Asmara in recent memory.

The government maintains a tight grip on the most densely populated areas: Massawa, Keren, Asmara.

---

*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.*



Eritrea is also very concerned about its relationship with Ethiopia. In March 2015, there was an explosion at the Bisha Mining Company (a Canadian and Eritrean venture), which reported that the incident as an “act of vandalism.” The government and some media, blog sites, and websites reported it as an attack by Ethiopia, while others stated that the attackers and methods were unknown. The tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea is always of concern, with border skirmishes occurring frequently, however , attacks further into the region are not common.

## **Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence**

Post Political Violence Rating: High

In January 2013, a small group of government and military officials seized a government building, seeking government reform. By the end of the day, the military members left the building and were arrested in the ensuing days. In the following weeks, flyers were placed around Asmara calling for Eritreans to flood the streets in support of those arrested and for political change. Ultimately, this effort did not materialize; most participants were afraid of the repercussions from the government, were pre-occupied with national service, or had left the country. The government does not tolerate criticism and reacts harshly to opposition.

Civil Unrest

---

*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 has not granted new building permits, which prompted individuals to build without them. In response, the government began bulldozing residences built without valid permits. In 2015, there were protests against these housing demolitions. This sparked a demonstration and protest in Adi Keih with students blocking bulldozers. Two students reportedly died.

## Religious/Ethnic Violence

Though RSO watches the border with Sudan and the coast of the Red Sea out of concern for the possibility of anti-Western groups slipping in, it is unlikely the Eritrean population would be easily radicalized.

Asmara is predominantly Orthodox Christian while the lowlands of Eritrea are predominantly Muslim. RSO is not aware of any tensions between the two groups. The government only recognizes Islam, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Orthodox Christianity and regularly persecutes those of unrecognized religions (Jehovah's Witness, Pentecostals). The Jehovah Witnesses International publicizes 55 JW believers incarcerated in Eritrea. A number of locally employed staff have been jailed for practicing an unauthorized religion. Many speculate that JW are persecuted due to their unwillingness to bear arms and their refusal to participate in the original vote for independence. In a country with mandatory national service and no alternative for conscientious objectors, individuals are imprisoned for not fulfilling their duties as citizens.

---

*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.*



## Post-specific Concerns

### Environmental Hazards

Eritrea lies on a fault line, and in September 2013, Embassy employees felt a slight tremor. No damage to Embassy facilities and no injuries were reported. The Embassy used the opportunity to send out to all employees a Security Notice for best practices during an earthquake.

### Critical Infrastructure Concerns

Frequent power failures cause even popular areas to be unilluminated without warning. Eritrea is also experiencing a shortage of water supply, so water is being rationed by the government.

Minor accidents occur frequently in factories. Some factories are in ill-repair, and safeguards found in Western factories are often absent. Safety training is rare, causing deaths each year.

### Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

---

*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.*



Because Eritrea is so closed off; counterfeit movies are common via downloads and via thumb-drives. Intellectual property theft tends to be limited to small-scale goods.

### Privacy Concerns

It is believed that foreigners (Americans, Westerners) are closely monitored in Eritrea. There are some reports that domestic staff and Eritrean workers are required to report on the activities of foreign employers.

### Drug-related Crimes

Eritrea has very strict drug laws, and penalties are harsh.

### Eritrean Currency Conversion

At the end of 2015, Eritrea changed its national currency, the Nakfa. All old Nakfa, not placed in Eritrean banks before the deadline set by the government, no longer have value. The new currency resembles the old currency except for color and issuance dates. While the old Nakfa came in an array of colors, the new Nakfa is brown-grey.

---

*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.*



As of early 2016, there has been a limited availability of new Nakfa. Individuals are authorized to withdraw between 3,000-5,000 Nakfa (US\$200-444) per month from the bank. This has had a significant impact on the economy, as there have been verified reports of businesses and organizations unable to pay staff. There are also reports of businesses and citizens being forced to barter, due to the lack of available currency. Tenants are having problems paying rent. Rent is also being required to be paid to the Zoba Administration, not directly to the landlord, so that the income can be taxed and the money deposited into the landlord account. In January, marriage and other ceremony hosts encountered problems in paying for services and products. It is unknown how long the government will continue to restrict the availability of Nakfa.

## **Police Response**

Police patrols generally do not speak English, so communication can be difficult.

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

The Travel Warning emphasizes the Embassy's inability to assist in cases of arrest of American citizens, especially those who are dual nationals. The government does not notify the U.S. Embassy of American citizens' arrested, and they will not allow an official American to visit the detainee.

It is recommended that if an American is harassed or detained, s/he should call or have a friend report the situation to the Embassy (Tel: 291-1-120004). If an American is harassed by

---

*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 police, s/he should attempt to get names of the arresting officer and provide that information to the Embassy. This may be very difficult due to language barriers or may not be provided. The Embassy will do as much as possible to assist U.S. citizens in Eritrea, but the Eritrean government is generally not cooperative.

### Crime Victim Assistance

The Embassy experience has been that local police have a willingness, but often not the capability, to assist. It is possible that police will not be able to come to the scene of the crime but are willing to take a police report at the station. It is not uncommon for individuals to provide police with transportation to a crime scene if a police vehicle is not available. Most crimes are handled by one of the district's stations. However, if a crime involves corruption or the diplomatic community, it is referred to headquarters for investigation. The Embassy highly recommends that an American victim of a crime also report the incident to the Embassy because it is unlikely the local police will share that information.

### Police/Security Agencies

Eritrea has a centralized police service that investigates crimes and enforces traffic laws. Eritrea is divided into six districts. Maekel ("Central") District encompasses Asmara and the surrounding areas. Each district is divided into areas of responsibility, which are assigned a police station. Maekel District has seven police stations.

---

*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 Prevention Unit: 291-1-125-229

Investigations Unit: 291-1-115-402

Airport Security: 291-1-186-604

1st police station: 291-1-127-799

2nd police station: 291-1-116-219

3rd police station: 291-1-114-942

4th police station: 291-08-373-068

5th police station: 291-1-151-118

6th police station: 291-1-115-551

7th police station: 291-1-186-743

Any traffic accidents or other traffic violations are handled by the traffic police.

Besides the police, there are also military police. Military police are responsible for responding to protests, riots, or other civil disturbances. Although the Embassy is told that there is a special riot police, military police or actual military units generally respond to anything resembling civil unrest.

---

*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.*



Eritrea had a diplomatic police unit. At one time, this unit provided static police protection at most diplomatic missions in Asmara. In 2011, the unit ceased static protection. The government indicated that they would provide mobile and foot patrols. The Embassy has not seen any evidence of mobile or foot patrol; however, the police have responded to the alarms originating from Embassy drills. This unit would be responsible for investigating crimes involving diplomatic property/personnel.

Eritrea has municipal/administrative police managed by each municipality. These are unarmed police who do not have arrest power and are mainly responsible for administrative issues. They are responsible for visiting building sites to ensure the builder has a permit; verifying that businesses have first aid kits/fire extinguishers; and checking grocery stores to see if they are selling expired items or using plastic bags, which are illegal. They also regulate street vendors.

The civilian militia has taken on some patrol duties. At night, members patrol their neighborhoods. The civilian militia has static posts where they provide coverage to banks, gas depots, government buildings, airport, etc. They are basically police officers (with specific, restricted mandates) and are sometimes (during large national holidays/events such as the May 24th celebration) instructed to check the documents of pedestrians to ensure they have complied with National Service.

## **Medical Emergencies**

Travelers must bring their own medical supplies, prescription drugs, and preventative medicines. For more information, please refer to OSAC's Report, "Traveling with Medications." Doctors and hospitals expect payment at time of service for foreigners.

---

*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.*



Travelers should check with the American Citizen Services section at the U.S. Embassy for the most current information.

#### Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Sembel Hospital: 291-1-150-175

Orota Hospital: 291-1-201-917 or 291-1-202-914

#### Available Air Ambulance Services

SOS USA: 1-800-523-6586

SOS London International: 00-44-20-8762-8133

SOS Geneva: 00-41-22-785-6464

#### Recommended Insurance Posture

The policy of the U.S. Embassy is to stabilize and evacuate. Those individuals not in critical need of medical care can be evacuated via commercial air. The Embassy uses SOS flights for

---

*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.*



emergency evacuation. There were issues regarding air access for SOS flights; however, those issues have largely been resolved.

## CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Malaria is prevalent in the coastal areas and western lowlands. Malaria prophylaxis is recommended when traveling to these areas.

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

## OSAC Country Council Information

There is no OSAC Country Council in Eritrea, but the U.S. Embassy is working to create one in the near future. To reach OSAC's AF team, please email [OSACAF@state.gov](mailto:OSACAF@state.gov).

## U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

### Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

---

*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 U.S. Embassy is located at 179 Alaa Street.

The hours of operation are Mon-Thurs 0800-1800, Fri 0800-1200.

### Embassy Contact Numbers

Regional Security Officer: 291-1-120004 ext 2778 or 291-1-124367

Embassy Operator: 291-1-120004

Medical Unit: 291-1-120004 ext 2156 or 291-1-120342

Consular Affairs: 291-1-120004 ext 2415 or 291-1-120342

Pol/Econ: 291-1-120004 ext 2174

Website: <http://eritrea.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

The Embassy recommends that visitors be aware of their surroundings.

People are encouraged not to walk in isolated or dark areas late at night. Pedestrians are encouraged to be extremely cognizant of vehicle traffic at night. The Embassy recommends carrying a flashlight to help avoid broken sidewalks and potholes. If out past midnight, the Embassy recommends traveling via vehicle and not walking on isolated streets. Those out after-hours should avoid confrontation with intoxicated persons.

People should be leery of emotionally disturbed persons and panhandlers who congregate in the downtown area. The Embassy recommends that individuals walking in the downtown area not engage the homeless or panhandlers. Foreigners are easily identified by panhandlers, and people should never display large amounts of money.

Credit cards are not generally accepted, and their use is not recommended, due to power failures that limit the ability to accept credit cards, and old credit card techniques that use manual imprint machines sometimes take an inconveniently long time to reach the customer's account. Foreigners residing in the Asmara Palace are required to pay in U.S. dollars.

For properties not equipped with a 24-hour guard presence or high perimeter walls, individuals should be very careful about what is left in plain sight in their yard. The Embassy has received reports of items (propane tanks, tools, equipment) being stolen from yards.

---

*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.*