



Travel Warning: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Crime; Political Violence; Travel Health and Safety

Africa > Congo, Democratic Republic of the

10/7/2016

The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens of ongoing instability and sporadic violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The potential for civil unrest remains high in Kinshasa and other major cities. In addition armed groups, bandits, and some elements of the Congolese armed forces continue to engage in murder, kidnapping, and robbery in a number of areas of eastern DRC. Very poor transportation infrastructure throughout the country and poor security conditions make it difficult for the U.S. Embassy to provide consular services anywhere outside of Kinshasa. As of October 7, the Department of State ended the ordered departure of family members of U.S. government personnel, permitting family members to return to Kinshasa. This replaces the Travel Warning dated September 29, 2016.

On September 19 and 20, violent clashes over the election process erupted between security forces and demonstrators, resulting in the loss of life and the destruction of property. The potential for additional civil unrest remains high and the security situation in major cities is unpredictable.

In addition, armed groups, bandits, and some elements of the Congolese armed forces continue to operate in:

- North Kivu
- South Kivu
- Bas-Uele
- Haut-Uele
- Ituri
- Tanganyika
- Haut-Lomami

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These groups kill, rape, kidnap, pillage, steal vehicles, and carry out military or paramilitary operations in which civilians can be indiscriminately targeted. Kidnapping for ransom is common, particularly in areas north and west of Goma, North Kivu. Congolese military and United Nations forces continue to operate throughout North and South Kivu and near the DRC's borders with the Central African Republic and the Republic of South Sudan, particularly in and around Garamba National Park. Travelers in the region may encounter troop movements, armored vehicles and attack helicopters.

Travelers are frequently detained and questioned by poorly trained security forces at official and unofficial roadblocks and border crossings throughout the country, especially near government buildings and installations in Kinshasa. Be cautious when stopped by security forces. Requests for bribes are extremely common, and security forces have occasionally injured or killed people who refuse to pay. In the past year, several U.S. citizens have been illegally detained by government forces or robbed of their valuables while being searched. For further information:

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information for Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

U.S. citizens who travel to or remain in the DRC despite this Travel Warning are urged to provide their current contact information and next-of-kin information through STEP.

Contact the U.S. Embassy in the DRC, located at 310 Avenue des Aviateurs in Kinshasa, at +243-081-884-6859 or +243-081-884-4609 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is 081-556-0151.

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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