



Travel Warning: Democratic Republic of Congo

Political Violence

Africa > Congo, Democratic Republic of the

12/3/2016

The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa warns U.S. citizens of the potential for large-scale demonstrations and civil unrest on/around December 19, the date on which President Kabila's term in office was due to end before elections were delayed.

U.S. citizens in the DRC should seriously consider leaving the country in advance of this date. As a result of the deteriorating security situation, the Department of State has ordered family members of U.S. government personnel and authorized non-emergency personnel to depart the country as of December 10, 2016. This replaces the Travel Warning dated October 7, 2016.

U.S. citizens should consider taking advantage of departing commercial flights and other transportation options now. All U.S. citizens should have evacuation plans that do not rely solely on U.S. government assistance. U.S. citizens should ensure that travel documents (passports and visas) are valid and up-to-date. Consular services, already limited throughout the country due to very poor transportation infrastructure and security conditions, may be further limited even in Kinshasa.

U.S. citizens who decide to remain in DRC through December 19 should prepare for the possible deterioration of security:

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Exercise caution and remain abreast of the security situation.
Follow the instructions of local authorities.
Stay home or at another safe location.
Have emergency supplies of food, water, and medications.
Let friends and family know that there might be communication disruptions.

Additional recommendations on emergency preparedness are available on the Travel.State.gov web page "What Can You Do in a Crisis Abroad?"
In addition, ongoing instability and sporadic violence continue in parts of the DRC. Armed groups, bandits, and some elements of the Congolese armed forces operate in:

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

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:

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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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