

Sunday May 28, 2006

Travel Warning

United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520

This information is current as of today, Sun May 28 15:57:31 2006.

COLOMBIA

January 18, 2006

This Travel Warning updates ongoing security concerns in Colombia and reminds American citizens of those concerns. This supersedes the Travel Warning issued May 4, 2005.

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the dangers of travel to Colombia. Violence by narcoterrorist groups and other criminal elements continues to affect all parts of the country, urban and rural, including border areas. Citizens of the United States and other countries continue to be victims of threats, kidnappings, and other criminal acts.

Violence in recent years has decreased markedly in most urban areas, including Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cartagena. The level of violence in Cali and its surrounding areas remains high, largely as a result of the illicit drug trade. Many rural portions of Colombia also remain extremely dangerous due to the presence of narcoterrorists and Colombian government operations against them.

At least five Americans were kidnapped in 2004, and at least one in 2005. No one can be considered immune from kidnapping on the basis of occupation, nationality, or other factors. Terrorist groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other criminal organizations, continue to kidnap civilians for ransom or as political bargaining chips. The FARC have held three American official contractors hostage since February 2003. Although the U.S. government places the highest priority on the safe recovery of kidnapped Americans, it is U.S. policy not to make concessions to or strike deals with kidnappers. Consequently, the U.S. government's ability to assist kidnapping victims is limited.

Official Americans and their families are permitted to travel to major cities, but only by air, and may not use inter- or intra-city bus transportation. They also are not permitted to travel by road outside of urban areas at night. All Americans in Colombia are urged to follow these precautions.

As the Department develops information on potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threats through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. U.S. citizens should consult warden messages for Colombia at <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwsc093.shtml>, as well as the Department of State's [Consular Information Sheet](#) for Colombia and [Worldwide Caution Public Announcement](#) at <http://travel.state.gov>. U.S. travelers can also get up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 in the U.S. or Canada or on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.



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