

Thursday July 27, 2006

Travel Warning

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

This information is current as of today, Thu Jul 27 09:40:41 2006.

SAUDI ARABIA

June 23, 2006

This Travel Warning reminds U.S. citizens of recommended security precautions and updates information on ongoing security concerns in Saudi Arabia. It supersedes the Travel Warning issued December 23, 2005.

Due to concerns about the possibility of additional terrorist activity directed against American citizens and interests, the Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens to defer non-essential travel to Saudi Arabia. The United States Mission in Saudi Arabia remains an unaccompanied post as a result of continued security concerns. Non-emergency employees and all dependents of the U.S. Embassy Riyadh and Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran were ordered to leave the country on April 15, 2004. An armed attack on the U.S. Consulate General in Jeddah occurred on December 6, 2004, resulting in casualties among the non-American staff and damage to consulate facilities. On November 13, 2005, the Consulate General in Jeddah closed the visa section for security reasons that require the assistance of the Government of Saudi Arabia to resolve. On May 12, a lone gunman fired shots at the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah. There were no injuries. The consular section remains open for American citizen services.

Terrorist groups continue to target housing compounds and other establishments where Westerners may be located. Saudi Government facilities are also targets. In addition to car bombs and armed assaults involving multiple gunmen against such facilities, terrorists have used ambush attacks to kidnap and/or assassinate individual Westerners. On February 24, there was a terrorist attack on Saudi oil facilities in Abqaiq in the Eastern Province. There were no U.S. citizens or Westerners injured in this attack however.

American citizens who choose to visit or remain in Saudi Arabia despite this Travel Warning are strongly urged to avoid staying in hotels or housing compounds that do not apply stringent security measures including, but not limited to, the presence of an armed guard force, inspection of all vehicles, and a hardened security perimeter to prevent unauthorized vehicles from approaching the facility. American citizens are further advised to exercise caution and maintain good situational awareness when visiting commercial establishments frequented by Westerners or in primarily Western environments. Keep a low profile, varying times and routes for all required travel, and ensure that travel documents and visas are valid. American citizens are also advised to exercise caution while driving, entering or exiting vehicles.

U.S. citizens who travel to or remain in Saudi Arabia despite this travel warning are strongly urged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh or the Consulates in Jeddah and Dhahran through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, in order to be included in the Mission's warden network. Updated travel and security information for Saudi Arabia is issued periodically via the warden network.

From time to time, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Saudi Arabia may restrict the travel of official Americans or suspend public services for security reasons. In those instances, the Embassy

and Consulates will keep the local American citizen community apprised through the Warden System and make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. Warden messages can be found on the U.S. Embassy Riyadh website: <http://riyadh.usembassy.gov>.

Updated information on travel and security in Saudi Arabia may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 in the U.S. or Canada or on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. For additional information, consult the Department of State's Consular Information Sheet for Saudi Arabia, the Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, and Middle East and North Africa Public Announcement at <http://travel.state.gov>.



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