Democratic Republic of the Congo Travel Warning

December 4, 2015

U.S. State Department

https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-travel-warning.html

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (a.k.a. DRC or Congo-Kinshasa).  U.S. citizens should avoid all but essential travel to the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, the provinces of Bas-Uele, Haut-Uele and Ituriz (northeastern part of the former Oriental Province) and particularly the new provinces of Tanganyika and Haut-Lomami (northeastern and central parts of the former province of Katanga), where instability and sporadic violence continues. Very poor transportation infrastructure throughout the country and poor security conditions in eastern DRC make it difficult for the U.S. Embassy to provide consular services anywhere outside of Kinshasa. This replaces the Travel Warning dated November 25, 2014.

Armed groups, bandits, and elements of the Congolese armed forces, primarily located in the North Kivu, South Kivu, and the new provinces of Bas-Uele, Haut Uele, Tanganyika, Haut-Lomami, and the eastern part of Maniema Province, are known to 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. Military operations continue to target the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda throughout North and South Kivu, the Allied Democratic Forces in the Beni territory of North Kivu, and numerous other armed groups in the eastern Congo. The Lord's Resistance Army operates near the DRC’s borders with [Central African Republic](http://www.travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/central-african-republic-travel-warning.html) and the [Republic of South Sudan](http://www.travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/republic-of-south-sudan-travel-warning.html), particularly in and around Garamba National Park.

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

National elections are scheduled to take place in November 2016. Political protests and demonstrations with the potential for violence may occur before, during, or after the election. U.S. citizens are urged to exercise caution, avoid any politically-related demonstrations or protests, and remain abreast of the security situation throughout the election period.

Demonstrations, gatherings and even sporting events that are intended to be peaceful can become violent and turn deadly. Closely monitor local and international news from reliable sources. English-language news can be found on BBC at 92.6 FM. Radio Okapi broadcasts in French on 103.5 FM at 0700, 0800, 1200, and 1800 hours, and provides updates throughout the day. In emergencies, the Belgian Embassy operates a French-language radio broadcast system at FM 98.8.

Many infectious diseases are endemic in the country, and outbreaks of potentially deadly infectious diseases can also occur without warning. See the [Centers for Disease Control](http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/countries/drc/) website for further information. Travelers should consult with their healthcare provider before traveling to the [DRC](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/democratic-republic-of-congo) for applicable vaccinations and malaria prophylaxis.  Ensure that medical insurance includes medevac coverage.