

## Embassy Dhaka

### Travel Alert for Bangladesh

**December 3, 2013**

The U.S. Department of State alerts U.S. citizens traveling to or living in Bangladesh to the upcoming national elections that are scheduled for January 5, 2014. This Travel Alert expires on January 7, 2014.

Historically, pre-election periods in Bangladesh have seen unrest involving supporters of the two major political parties. In 2013, the political dispute centers on disagreements regarding the structure for holding national elections scheduled for January 5, 2014. In Bangladesh, a common method for political parties and other organizations to articulate their political demands is by calling for a hartal (general strike). Hartals, the purpose of which is to disrupt or shut down services either locally or throughout the country, can turn violent if the population or political groups enforce the shutdown. In November, for example, there were hartals or blockades covering a total of ten days. Even demonstrations that are meant to be peaceful can become violent and unpredictable. These demonstrations often result in clashes between police and protesters, resulting in deaths and injuries to both protesters and police, and extensive property damage. In various areas of the country, demonstrators have blocked highways and roads to all traffic and have damaged rail tracks and trains. Participants have thrown rocks, debris, and petrol bombs, and there are reports of the use of firearms and homemade, low-yield explosives. Security forces have used tear gas, non-lethal crowd control measures, and lethal force against demonstrators.

U.S. citizens are urged to remain alert to local security developments and to be vigilant regarding their personal security by knowing the locations of police and fire stations, hospitals, and other places to relocate to feel secure. There have been no direct, targeted attacks on U.S. citizens; however, in isolated instances, Westerners and U.S. citizens have been caught in the middle of clashes and demonstrations or stranded when highways have been blocked. U.S. citizens are urged to remain alert to local security developments, carry identification, and to be vigilant regarding their personal security.

The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka is closely monitoring this situation and activity throughout Bangladesh. We will provide updates as the situation warrants on the [Embassy web site](#) and by email to [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) enrollees. U.S. citizens should monitor these sites, as well as local media. U.S. citizens are advised to be aware of their surroundings and exercise good judgment in the coming weeks. Please check our [Country Specific Information Sheet](#) for further security guidance.

Unless otherwise indicated in a public announcement, the U.S. Embassy is open for all routine American Citizens Services by appointment. U.S. citizens needing emergency assistance do not need an appointment. Visit the Embassy website <<http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/>> to check the latest changes to Embassy hours or services. U.S. citizens with routine phone inquiries may call the Embassy's American Citizens Services section at 882-3805, Sunday to Wednesday from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. The U.S. Embassy is closed on U.S. and [local holidays](#). U.S. citizens in Bangladesh are encouraged to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). By enrolling, U.S. citizens make it easier for the Embassy to contact them in case of emergency. For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's Internet website at [Travel.State.gov](http://Travel.State.gov) where the [Worldwide Caution](#), [Country Specific Information for Bangladesh](#), [Travel Warnings](#), and [Travel Alerts](#) can be found. Follow the Bureau of Consular Affairs on [Twitter](#) and on [Facebook](#) as well. Download our free [Smart Traveler iPhone](#) or [Android app](#) to have travel information at your fingertips.

Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada, or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The U.S. Embassy in [Bangladesh](#) is located at Madani Avenue, Dhaka, 1212. For emergencies after business hours and on weekends and holidays, U.S. citizens can contact the Embassy Duty Officer on mobile at 0171-304-3746 or via the Embassy switchboard at 885-5500.