



# ACS Newsletter Spring 2014 Edition

Spring Issue—2014

U.S. Embassy Nairobi, Kenya

*The quarterly  
newsletter of the  
American Citizen  
Services Unit*

On May 29, 2014, the ACS Unit organized a Town Hall Meeting for U.S. citizens at the Ambassador's residence in order to discuss the current security environment.



## Remarks Delivered by U.S. Ambassador Robert F. Godec at the Town Hall Meeting

### Contents

**Ambassador  
Godec's Remarks  
at the Town Hall** 1

**Ambassador's  
Remarks,  
continued** 2

**Summary of Town  
Hall Meeting** 3

**Packing a "Go  
Bag"** 4

**Financial First Aid  
Kit** 5

**Voting Info** 7

Thank you for coming today. The purpose of today's town hall is to have an open conversation, to ensure you have the best information I have available, to give you a chance to ask any questions you may have, and to dispel some of the rumors we have all heard in recent weeks.

Let me begin with this: the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi is not going anywhere. We have not closed any time recently and we are not closing. The United States' 50-year partnership with Kenya is broad, resilient, and it rests on a solid foundation. We cooperate closely with the Kenyan government and people on a wide variety of issues and initiatives, from building resilience in the Northern Arid Lands, to promoting youth empowerment in cities, to protecting Kenya's amazing wildlife heritage, to brokering partnerships for energy, to expanding U.S.-Kenya commercial ties. I could go on for days. We are partners in business, we are partners in development, and we are partners in the fight against terror. That is not going to change. Our support for Kenya is not going to change.

Our relations with the Kenyan government and people are becoming stronger and deeper. In just a few weeks, 46 young Kenyans will head to the U.S. as part of President Obama's Young African Leaders' Initiative, or YALI. Those leaders will get training and guidance in Washington, while here in Kenya we are working to build a network that will provide these young leaders with internships and development opportunities and ensure they are able to pass to other rising stars here in Kenya what they've learned in the United States.

That's just one example. There are many, many more. The key point is that we are committed to the Kenyan government and the Kenyan people.

## Ambassador Godec's Remarks, continued

My first priority as Ambassador, however, is to you: American citizens. I take my responsibility to you very seriously, and that includes my responsibility to share information with you pertaining to security, as and when it becomes available. My responsibility to you is direct and personal. Your safety, and the safety of your families, is my number one priority. When we issue travel advice and warnings, we base it on the best information we have available, and give you the best assessment we can of what's out there. And, despite what you may have heard or read in the Kenyan media, our travel warnings and security messages have nothing – nothing – to do with politics. It has nothing to do with visits by foreign leaders. It has nothing to do with how people voted or vote. It has nothing to do with anything other than your security.

The conspiracy theories that are floating around aren't just wrong, they also risk diverting the focus from where it needs to be... security. From the Westgate attack, the bombs going off in Nairobi and Mombasa, and the threats issued by al Shabaab in Somalia, we all know there is a threat and it is serious. Terrorism poses a real challenge, and a real threat, in Kenya.

I know you can see that for yourselves, but I want to assure you that the U.S. Embassy has given you what information we can, so you can make the best choices for yourselves and your families. In addition to updating our travel warning and sending security advisories, let me briefly summarize some of the measures we have taken on security: First, the team and I are in close touch with the government of Kenya, which is working very hard to stop attacks and strengthen security. We are working closely with the Kenyans and provide a wide range of assistance. Other international partners are doing the same. We also have programs and assistance to the government of Somalia and AMISOM as well to address the problem where it originates. The Kenyan government has increased security generally for the international community, for example at Embassies here in Nairobi. In close coordination with Washington, we are taking steps to improve our own security at the U.S. Embassy. We have added security at the U.S. Embassy compound.

It has also been necessary to look at our footprint, as a mission, here in Kenya, and to look for positions, particularly positions with regional responsibilities, which might be moved elsewhere. These changes will not have an impact on our partnership with the Kenyan government, and they will not have an impact on our bilateral programs. Our commitment to Kenya is unchanged and unwavering.

This is a challenging moment in Kenya's history and the region's history. Everyone wants security to be great, but unfortunately it is not. I cannot predict the future. I do not have an answer to every question. But I can make two promises:

First, my team and I will continue to do what we can to assist the Kenyans with security. In doing so, we will also be helping to improve the security not just for Kenyans, but for Americans. Second, we will keep you informed. As we get new information, we will tell you.

In exchange, I ask two things of you. First, put your own security and that of your family first. Pay attention to things happening around you, and read the warnings and notices we send you. Second, please don't listen to rumors. If you hear something that concerns you or you are uncertain about, do not hesitate to contact the consular team or the RSO.

Finally, I would like to stress that my team and I are here to help you. We're here to answer your questions. We're here to do what we can for you as American citizens. Please take advantage of the services we provide, and the information we offer.

Thank you again for coming here today.

*Ambassador Robert Godec*



## Summary of Town Hall Q & A

**On May 29th, 2014, American Citizen Services held a town hall meeting for U.S. citizens at the Ambassador's Residence. During this past meeting, the Ambassador and other Embassy officers spent an hour answering questions related to security and other topics. Below is a summary of the questions and the responses that were provided.**

**Q:** There were numerous questions related to the drawdown of embassy personnel, such as: What percentage of staff are leaving? Is the drawdown based on security concerns or some other reason?

**A:** The Ambassador responded that the effort to reduce staffing is being driven by security, but it is also something that Department of State is looking at for every post in the world. He stressed that the size and scope of reductions has not yet been decided. In general, though, he said that most Embassy staff working on bilateral programs or critical regional issues are remaining, and the focus is on identifying staff/programs that do not necessarily need to be located in Kenya.

**Q:** There were several questions about the possibility of an evacuation, such as: is an evacuation being planned? In the event of an evacuation, what support would be available to non-U.S. citizens such as family members or co-workers?

**A:** The Ambassador responded that there are NO plans to evacuate anyone at the current time. The Consul General added that an evacuation scenario would likely follow a progression of increasingly severe security messages and travel warnings.

**Q:** How close are the security relationships between the UN / International Schools / GoK security agencies?

**A:** The Ambassador and Regional Security Officer responded that the Embassy has close ties to the security representatives of all the above. They coordinate daily and share information. Parents should be reassured that the Embassy is working closely with security at the major international schools and has taken steps to increase the security at those locations.

**Q:** Will there ever be a full investigative report into the Westgate terrorist attacks?

**A:** Ambassador Godec responded that he thought it would be extremely helpful and positive if such a report were issued, but was not aware of any specific efforts to do so.

**Q:** Have U.S.-funded programs to train Kenyan police/security forces had any positive impact?

**A:** The Ambassador responded that he believes these programs have played an important role in building the capacity of Kenya's security forces, but that much work remained. He stressed that U.S. funds support the Independent Police Oversight Authority and all programs insist on the importance of human rights and due process.

If you feel we omitted a question or a response, please contact [Kenya\\_ACS@state.gov](mailto:Kenya_ACS@state.gov) and the ACS unit will provide more information.

## CONTINGENCY PLANNING

### Pack a “Go Bag”

Contingency planning (AKA planning for unexpected events or emergencies) was another major theme at the Town Hall held on May 29. While no one is predicting a crisis or an evacuation, it is always good to be prepared

#### What is a Go Bag?

Basically, you need to have a piece of luggage or some kind of backpack packed that you could grab in an instant.

Whether it is a house fire, an earthquake or an emergency evacuation, having a bag prepared can help save your life or, at the very least, provide you with everything you may need in case you are evacuated. Each family member (even pets and kids) should have their go bag and every family should have documents and important items in their grab bag.



#### What to Pack:

- Change of clothes (take climate into consideration)
- Good, sturdy shoes + socks
- Toothbrush + toothpaste, soap & other necessary toiletries
- Spare pair of prescription eyeglasses
- Comfort items or toys
- Flashlights (pack spare batteries)
- Whistle and a pocket knife (such as a Swiss Army Knife)
- Extra snacks
- Enough medicine to last an extended evacuation period
- Pet, child, and elderly care needs
- Positive Identification, such as driver’s license, state I.D. card
- Check visas and passport dates
- Photocopy of your passport
- Other government issued identification
- Photocopy of the deed to your house
- Home and vehicle insurance policy
- Photocopy of health insurance documents
- Photos of family (for identification purposes)
- Local map and local emergency contact info (ex. shelters)
- Emergency cash
- Weather appropriate clothing (e.g., poncho, headwear, gloves)
- Water bottles + food (something easy to open)
- Spare house keys

## CONTINGENCY PLANNING

### Prepare an “Emergency Financial First Aid Kit”

#### Suggested List of Important Documents

##### LEGAL:

- Birth Certificate(s)/ Adoption Papers
- Marriage License
- Divorce Papers
- Social Security Cards
- Passport/Green Card
- Naturalization Documents
- Will
- Powers of Attorney (personal/property)
- Mortgage or Real Estate Deeds of trust
- Vehicle Registration/Ownership Papers

##### TAXES:

- Previous year’s tax returns
- Property tax statement
- Personal property tax (i.e. car tax)

##### FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS:

- Bank/Credit Union Statements
- Credit/Debit Card Statements
- Retirement Accounts
- Investment Accounts

##### SOURCES OF INCOME/ASSETS:

- Recent pay stubs for **all** sources of income
- Government benefits (i.e. Social Security)
- Alimony income
- Child support income
- Professional appraisals of personal property
- Reward accounts (i.e. Frequent Flyer)

##### FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS:

- Mortgage statement
- Lease
- Utility bills (Electric, water, gas)
- Car payment
- Student loan(s)
- Alimony payment
- Child support payment
- Elder care facilities

##### INSURANCE:

- Property insurance
- Rental insurance
- Auto insurance
- Life insurance

##### MEDICAL:

- Health insurance ID card(s)
- Record of immunizations/allergies
- List of necessary medications
- Disabilities documentation
- Living will
- Dental records/Child Identity Cards/  
DNA swabs

##### MILITARY:

- Current Military ID
- Military Discharge DD 214

#### What is an Emergency Financial First Aid Kit?

The Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) is a simple tool to help Americans minimize the financial impact of a natural disaster or emergency. It helps users identify and organize key financial records and serves as a quick reference to their most important financial documents, thus recovering much quicker by using it.

“We live in a vulnerable world where it is likely that we – or someone we know— will be affected by a disaster, public health event, crime, or terrorism. Emergencies often come when we least expect it, yet many of us do not think to prepare our financial interests in advance. The Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) is here to help!”

## KNOW YOUR NEWS SOURCES

### RADIO STATIONS:

Easy 9.3 FM                      KBC 95.6 FM  
 KISS 100.3 FM                  Family Radio 105.2 FM  
 Classic 105.0 FM                Capital 98.4 FM

### Twitter:

@acs\_kenya  
 @NairobiCrimeAlert  
 @CitizenTVNews  
 @NDOCKenya

### STAY INFORMED! KEEP UP WITH LOCAL NEWS!

### Facebook:

U.S. Embassy Nairobi  
 American Citizen Services Kenya  
 Nairobi Crime Alert

### NEWSPAPER:

www.nation.co.ke  
 www.standardmedia.co.ke  
 www.webkenya.com/news.php  
 www.trending.co.ke

## What can ACS do for you?

### PASSPORTS:

We can process your application for passport renewal, add pages to your passport, or report and replace a lost or stolen passport.

### CONSULAR REPORT OF BIRTH ABROAD:

We can process your application for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad for children up to eighteen years of age.

### NOTARY SERVICES:

We can provide notary services including notarization of affidavits.

### ENROLL WITH US:

We can assign you wardens and send email and SMS updates to those enrolled with us via STEP.

### TRAVELLING AND LIVING IN KENYA:

We maintain information about Kenya at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) regarding safety, security, Kenyan visa requirements and more.

### VOTING:

We can help you with the absentee voting process.

### TAXES:

We share information about filing U.S. taxes.

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

We can help coordinate air evacuation, provide a list of hospitals or doctors, contact your family and friends (with your permission) and visit you in the hospital. In some cases, we can help arrange a loan for emergency medical care.

### FEDERAL BENEFITS:

We can act as liaison for your Social Security and Veteran Affairs benefits.

### SENDING MONEY:

We can help your family members or friends send emergency funds to you.

### SELECTIVE SERVICES:

We can help you enroll.

Here is a list of the services we provide!

E-mail Kenya\_ACS@state.gov for more info about our services

# send your vote home



**FVAP.gov**  
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**It's an election  
year—Don't forget  
to vote!**

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so — from anywhere in the world.

Go to [www.FVAP.gov](http://www.FVAP.gov) to get more information on voting requirements

**American Citizen  
Services  
Consular Section  
American Embassy  
Nairobi**

U.N. Avenue, Gigiri,  
Nairobi, Kenya

**Tel:** +254-20-363-6451

After hours emergency  
Tel: +254-20-363-6170

Embassy Switchboard:  
+254-20-363-6000

**Email:**

[Kenya\\_ACS@state.gov](mailto:Kenya_ACS@state.gov)

**Hours:**

**Monday to Thursday  
7:15 am to 3:00 pm**

*Except for Kenyan & American  
holidays and the last Wednesday  
of every month.*

You can also find us on our  
media sites:

**Website:**

<http://nairobi.usembassy.gov>

**Twitter:**

[https://twitter.com/acs\\_kenya](https://twitter.com/acs_kenya)

**Facebook:**

[https://www.facebook.com/  
pages/American-Citizen-  
Services-  
Kenya/106703552789700?  
ref=hl](https://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Citizen-Services-Kenya/106703552789700?ref=hl)



## Upcoming Holidays

### American and Kenyan Holidays:

- July 4 — Independence Day



### Did you know?

July 4th was officially declared a holiday in 1870, nearly one hundred years after the Declaration of Independence was written.