

**U.S. Embassy Lilongwe, Malawi**  
**Security Message for U.S. Citizens**  
**Holiday Security Reminders**  
**December 13, 2012**

The U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe, Malawi reminds all U.S. citizens that criminal activity tends to increase during the holiday season. The embassy has received reports that Malawi's crime rate has increased in 2012, including instances of home invasion, assault and robbery. We recommend all U.S. citizens seriously consider the following tips and precautions:

Personal Security Measures

Please exercise caution and be extra vigilant as you go about your holiday routine. Criminal elements may be targeting and assessing you at any time. Be a hard target; take the following precautions:

- Carry as little with you as possible when shopping or out in town (avoid displaying wallets, bags, purses, jewelry, IPODs, etc).
- Always travel with a companion or group if possible.
- Keep car windows up and doors locked.
- Be aware of your surroundings when and before you enter or exit your car.
- Don't leave items in plain view in your vehicle. Place valuables in the trunk or in the rear of the vehicle and close your window screen.
- Walk with confidence and purpose.
- Make sure your car is in good operating condition.
- If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't – remove yourself from the situation.
- Keep your cell phone charged, with emergency numbers pre-programmed (the local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Malawi is 199 or 997).

Now is a great time to review your family's plan for handling emergencies.

Malawi Police plan to increase patrols throughout the country so expect heavy traffic police presence on the roads, particularly speed traps. DO NOT drink and drive. If attending a holiday party please have a designated driver. Drive with extreme caution, particularly at night and pay attention to pedestrians.

If you find yourself in a potentially dangerous situation, cooperate with the criminals. Your life and the lives of your family members are more important than any material item(s) they demand.

Remember to leave contact information with a trusted friend or co-worker.

You can stay in touch and get Embassy updates by checking the [U.S. Embassy Lilongwe](#) web site. You can also get global updates at the U.S. Department of State's, [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#) where you can find the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warning](#), Travel Alerts, and [Country Specific Information](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well or you can download our free Smart Traveler app for iPhone or Android to keep travel information at your fingertips. If you don't have internet access, current information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States, or for callers from other countries, 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).

If you are going to live in or travel to Malawi, please take the time to tell us about your trip by enrolling in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP). If you enroll, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. You should remember to keep all of your information in STEP up to date. It is important during enrollment or updating of information to include your current phone number and current email address where you can be reached in case of an emergency.

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