



U.S. Embassy, Manila, Philippines

Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Worldwide Caution

JANUARY 12, 2015

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IS TRANSMITTING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS A PUBLIC SERVICE TO U.S. CITIZENS IN THE PHILIPPINES. PLEASE DISSEMINATE THIS MESSAGE TO ALL U.S. CITIZENS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION OR NEIGHBORHOOD. THANK YOU.

The U.S. Embassy wishes to advise all U.S. citizens that the Department of State issued an updated Worldwide Caution Alert on January 9, 2015.

The Department of State is updating the Worldwide Caution to provide information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. Recent terrorist attacks, whether by those affiliated with terrorist entities, copycats, or individual perpetrators, serve as a reminder that U.S. citizens need to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated October 10, 2014.

The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. On September 22, 2014, the United States and regional partners commenced military action against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated terrorist organization in Syria and Iraq. In response to the airstrikes, ISIL called on supporters to attack foreigners wherever they are. Authorities believe there is an increased likelihood of reprisal attacks against U.S., Western and coalition partner interests throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Information specific to the Philippines:

Information from credible sources suggests that there is a continued risk of armed terrorist and criminal groups operating and planning attacks against foreigners, including U.S. citizens, in the East Asian and Pacific region. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Abu Sayyaf Group, have cells operating throughout Southeast Asia and JI is linked to al-Qaida and other regional terrorist groups.

There is a risk of travel to the southern Philippines, specifically related to kidnapping threats in the Sulu Archipelago and the ongoing threat of violence on the island of Mindanao, particularly in Central Mindanao.

Over the past year there have been several kidnappings-for-ransom targeting foreigners in the Eastern Sabah province of Malaysia and in the southern Sulu Sea area by terrorist or insurgent groups based in the Sulu Archipelago of the Philippines. In addition to incursions on the coastal and island resorts themselves, criminal or terrorist bands may attempt to intercept boats ferrying tourists in the area.

The full text of the message can be found on the Department of State web site at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/worldwide-caution.html>. The message can also be accessed through the Embassy web site at <http://manila.usembassy.gov/wwwha008.html>. U.S. citizens should closely monitor Travel Warnings and Alerts, as well as Country Specific Information, on the Department of State's travel website to be informed of the latest safety and security information for destination countries.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila is located at 1201 Roxas Boulevard, and is open 07:30-16:00, Monday through Friday. The Embassy's main telephone number is (632) 301-2000. U.S. citizens needing to speak to the Embassy can dial this number and ask to be connected to the American Citizens Services (ACS) unit. You can also contact the ACS unit through email at ACSInfoManila@state.gov or through the [Embassy Facebook page](#). Please [visit our website](#) for information on all services offered by the ACS unit. If you are a U.S. citizen in need of urgent assistance outside of business hours, call the Embassy's emergency after-hours number (632) 301-2000 and ask for the Embassy Duty Officer.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in the Philippines enroll in the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) at travel.state.gov. STEP enrollment gives you the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy or nearest U.S. consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Regularly monitor the State [Department's website](#), where you can find current [Travel Warnings](#), including the [Travel Warning for the Philippines](#), Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution. Read the [Country Specific Information for the Philippines](#). For additional information, refer to "[Traveler's Checklist](#)" on the State Department's website.

Contact the U.S. embassy or consulate for up-to-date information on travel restrictions. You can also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to have travel information at your fingertips.

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