

Travel Warning

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Mali

July 18, 2013

The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens against all travel to Mali because of ongoing conflict in northern Mali, fluid political conditions, and continuing threats of attacks and kidnappings of westerners. While the security situation in Bamako remains relatively stable, there are ongoing security concerns and military operations taking place in the northern and western parts of the country. Mali continues to face challenges including food shortages, internally displaced persons, and the presence in northern Mali of extremist and militant factions. This Travel Warning replaces the Travel Warning for Mali dated March 22, 2013.

Public demonstrations in Mali were banned during the "state of emergency" in effect from January 12 through July 6, following a January 10 terrorist offensive and a January 11 military intervention by French forces. The "state of emergency" enabled the government to take extraordinary measures to deal with the crisis in the north. The state of emergency expired on July 6. Groups may once again congregate in open, public locations, and campaigning has begun for the presidential election scheduled to take place on July 28, with a second round, if necessary, to be held on August 11.

As a result of safety and security concerns following the Spring 2012 coup and counter coup, some organizations, including foreign companies, NGOs, and private aid organizations temporarily suspended operations in Mali or withdrew some family members and/or staff. Many of these organizations have now recommenced operations and started to allow family members and staff to return. The U.S. Embassy continues to operate normally and will continue to monitor the situation closely and update U.S. citizens via Security or Emergency Messages for U.S. Citizens which it will post on the [Embassy's website](#).

The U.S. Embassy has instructed embassy employees and their dependents to be cautious when traveling within Bamako. It encourages U.S. citizens to exercise caution, remain vigilant, maintain situational awareness at all times, and take appropriate security precautions to ensure personal safety. U.S. citizens throughout Mali should develop personal contingency plans, avoid all unnecessary travel, and travel on main roads. Malian security forces are regularly updating security safeguards, including checkpoints and other controls on movement in Bamako and around the country. A United Nations peacekeeping mission has also been deployed in Mali. On July 1, the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) transferred its authority to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). When fully deployed, MINUSMA is expected to have more than 12,000 personnel in Mali.

The Government of Mali may periodically impose or lift curfews as security needs may dictate. U.S. citizens should be mindful of such potential measures, stay attuned to local news announcing such curfews, and comply with such locally imposed curfews. For internal safety and security reasons, the U.S. Embassy may also, without advance notice, periodically impose a temporary curfew on U.S. Embassy employees should the need arise. Whenever possible, such restrictions will be shared with the private U.S. citizen community and posted on the Embassy's website. U.S. citizens should carefully consider adopting similar safety measures by limiting any unnecessary travel or movements during such periods of heightened tension.

Extremist and militant elements, including al Qaeda in the Lands of Islamic Maghreb (Elements of AQIM), Ansar al-Dine, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad (MUJAO), and other groups continue to be present in northern Mali, although they have been mostly dislodged from major population centers, including Gao and Timbuktu. The situation in Kidal remains fluid, but a June 18 agreement between the Government of Mali and armed northern groups provided for an interim solution that allowed for the return of the Government of Mali's authority to that city and permitted citizens of that region the opportunity to participate in the July 28 presidential elections. Terrorist groups have stepped up their rhetoric calling for additional attacks or kidnapping attempts on westerners, particularly those linked to support for international military intervention.

U.S. citizens should also note that the Embassy has prohibited all personal travel by U.S. government employees and their dependents to all areas in Mali outside the central area of the Koulikoro Region. The Koulikoro Region includes the district of Bamako and cities of Koulikoro, Ouessébougou, Siby, and Kangaba. Official travel outside the Koulikoro region requires prior authorization from the Ambassador. These designations are based on insecurity in areas adjacent to this area, including the presence of AQIM and the threat of kidnapping, as well as banditry in the outlying regions. U.S. citizens planning to travel to Mali, particularly to destinations outside of Bamako, should consult the U.S. Embassy's website or your host organization(s) for the most recent security assessment of the areas where you plan to travel.

Senou International Airport in Bamako is open for business and scheduled flights are proceeding normally. Some international flights have occasionally been canceled due to low travel volume, but travelers have been notified in advance. Persons wishing to depart the country should check with commercial airlines for the airport's operational status, and flight and seat availability, before traveling to the airport.

In this period of heightened tension, the U.S. Embassy reminds all U.S. citizens of the risk of terrorist activity in Mali, including in Bamako. U.S. citizens are urged to exercise caution, to be particularly alert to their surroundings, and to avoid crowds, demonstrations, or any other form of public gathering. U.S. citizens are further encouraged to exercise prudence if choosing to visit locations frequented by westerners in and around Bamako.

The U.S. Embassy may close temporarily for non-emergency business from time to time to review its security posture. U.S. citizens currently in Mali, despite this Travel Warning, should enroll in the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). By enrolling, the Embassy can contact you more easily in case of emergency.

U.S. citizens should consult the [Country Specific Information for Mali](#) and the [Worldwide Caution](#), both located on the [Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#). Current information

on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada, or a regular toll line at 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).

Stay up to date by bookmarking our [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings](#) and [Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the [Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook](#) as well. You can also download our free [Smart Traveler](#) App, available through [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#), to have travel information at your fingertips.

The U.S. Embassy in Bamako is located in ACI 2000 at Rue 243, Porte 297. The Embassy's mailing address is B.P. 34, Bamako, Mali. The telephone number, including for after-hour emergencies, is 223 2070-2300. The consular fax number is 223 2070-2340.