



Special Travel Notice for Syria

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In accordance with MS 220, 3.3.2, the Offices of Safety and Security and Global Operations restrict Volunteer travel to Syria until further notice.

For additional information, please consult the Department of State Travel Warning issued on March 31, 2016 at www.travel.state.gov.

The Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens against all travel to Syria and strongly recommends that U.S. citizens remaining in Syria depart immediately. This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning dated August 27, 2015, to remind U.S. citizens that the security situation remains dangerous and unpredictable as violent conflict between government and armed anti-government groups continues throughout the country, along with an increased risk of kidnappings, bombings, murder, and terrorism.

No part of Syria should be considered safe from violence. The potential for hostile acts exists throughout the country, including kidnappings and the use of chemical warfare against civilians. Shelling and aerial bombardment, including of densely populated urban areas, have significantly raised the risk of death or serious injury. The destruction of infrastructure, housing, medical facilities, schools, and power and water utilities has also increased hardships inside the country.

There is a terrorist threat from violent extremist groups including ISIL, formerly known as al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI), the al-Nusra Front (al-Qa'ida's Syrian branch), and others. Tactics for these groups include the use of suicide bombers, kidnapping, use of small and heavy arms, and improvised explosive devices in major city centers, including Damascus, Aleppo, Hamah, Dara, Homs, Idlib, and Dayr al-Zawr. U.S. citizens have been specifically targeted for kidnapping, both for ransom and political purposes, and murdered by members of terrorist and violent extremist groups in Syria. U.S. citizens have disappeared within Syria. Public places, such as road checkpoints, border crossings, government buildings, shopping areas, and open spaces, have been targeted. Due to the security situation in Syria, the U.S. government's ability to help U.S. citizens kidnapped or taken hostage is very limited. Although a Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) was announced by the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) Ceasefire Task Force in February 2016, fighting still persists between combatants in Syria. Moreover, the CoH does not include ISIL or al-Nusra Front, which have not renounced the use of violence. The CoH does not make the security situation in Syria any less dangerous for U.S. citizens.