

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2024

# Legend Travel Bulletin

AMERICAS

AFRICA & THE  
MIDDLE EAST

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

EUROPE

## Travel Reminders

### REAL ID DEADLINE EXTENDED

Travelers have until May 7, 2025 to ensure their driver's license meets REAL ID standards to board domestic flights and access certain federal facilities. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its intent to extend the REAL ID full enforcement date by 24 months, from May 3, 2023 to May 7, 2025. Under the new regulations published to execute this change, states will now have additional time to ensure their residents have driver's licenses and identification cards that meet the security standards established by the REAL ID Act. As required by the law, following the enforcement deadline, federal agencies, including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), will be prohibited from accepting driver's licenses and identification cards that do not meet these federal standards.

### ETIAS REQUIREMENTS DELAYED UNTIL 2025

The European Union was scheduled to launch the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) by 2024, however, the ETIAS has been postponed for another year, until at least 2025. Created by the European Union, the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) is an entry requirement for visa-exempt nationals traveling from [60 countries](#), including the US. Beginning in mid-2025, travelers will need complete a digital application to travel to one of [30 EU countries](#) for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Currently, US travelers do not need a visa for entry to these countries. Travelers will need to apply for a visa using the [official ETIAS website](#) or mobile application; most applications will incur a small processing fee of 7 Euros.

## NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

### DEC 27

- Falkland Islands, Hungary: Christmas Holiday
- Hanukkah (Day 2)
- Poland: National Day of the Victorious Greater Poland Uprising

### DEC 28

- Hanukkah (Day 3)
- South Sudan: Republic Day
- Eswatini: Incwala Day

### DEC 29

- Spain: Feast of the Holy Family
- Hanukkah (Day 4)
- Cambodia: Peace Day
- Montenegro, Serbia: Mothers' Day
- Mongolia: Independence Day

### DEC 30

- Azerbaijan: New Year's Holiday
- Falkland Islands: Christmas Holiday
- Honduras: New Year holiday
- Hanukkah (Day 5)
- Myanmar: Kayin New Year Day
- Nepal: Tamu Lhosar
- Peru: Public Sector Holiday
- Philippines: Rizal Day
- Russia, Uzbekistan: New Year Holiday
- Eswatini; Day off for Incwala Day
- Thailand: New Year Special Holiday

### DEC 31

- New Year's Eve
- Azerbaijan : World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day
- Switzerland: Restoration of the Republic
- Falkland Islands: Christmas Holiday
- Honduras: New Year holiday
- Hanukkah (Day 6) / Rosh Chodesh Tevet
- Japan: December 31 Bank Holiday
- Peru: Public Sector Holiday
- Russia, Uzbekistan: New Year Holiday
- East Timor: National Heroes Day

# Americas

## **ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION TO BE REQUIRED FOR US PASSPORT HOLDERS BEGINNING JAN 8, 2025**

Effective January 8, 2025, the United Kingdom will require an Electronic Travel Authorization (UK ETA) for all US and Canadian passport holders, including babies and children, entering or transiting through the UK. For more information on requirements and the application process, please visit the [UK Visas and Immigration page](#). Applications can be completed via the UK ETA app or online via the [UK Visa & Immigration application](#) and costs £10 to apply; processing typically takes 3-5 business days. UK ETAs will be valid for two years from date of issuance.

## **HEIGHTENED SECURITY AT PHOENIX SKY HARBOR INTL AIRPORT, ARIZONA**

On December 27, travelers should expect residual disruption and heightened security at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport following a shooting at the facility. A shelter-in-place order was issued after gunshots were reported at Terminal 4 at around 9:40 PM local time on December 25. The order has since been lifted and airport operations have resumed after a brief pause. An investigation into the incident is ongoing and the number of casualties is unclear. The shooter has reportedly been arrested and there is no active threat at the airport. Travelers should continue to expect an increased police presence at the facility and follow all official directives.

## **WAR IN ISRAEL TO PROMPT PROTEST**

On December 27, travelers should expect disruption and heightened security measures during demonstrations linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian activists have regularly assembled at major gathering points, transport hubs, government buildings and university campuses. Scuffles occasionally occur. Several activist groups have planned demonstrations across the US on January 20, 2025 to coincide with the inauguration of president-elect Donald Trump. Although most of these demonstrations take place in Canada and the US, they are periodically held elsewhere in the region as well.

Throughout December, travelers should expect disruption and heightened security during demonstrations linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian activists have regularly assembled at major gathering points, transport hubs, government buildings, and university campuses. Scuffles occasionally occur. Although most such demonstrations take place in Canada and the US, they are periodically held elsewhere in the region

## **BRAZIL**

Through December 30, travelers should exercise caution due to weather-related disruption across several states. The National Institute of Meteorology (INMET) has issued orange warnings until at least 10:00 AM local time on December 27 for heavy rainfall across parts of Amazonas, Goias, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Palmas, Para, Rio de Janeiro, Rondonia and Sao Paulo states. Rainfall of up to four inches and wind of up to 62 miles per hour are expected. Additionally, yellow warnings are in place for most of the country.

Through December 31, travelers should avoid self-driving through urban areas in Rio de Janeiro due to recent attack on a foreign national. On December 12, two armed criminals shot an Argentine national in the head and thorax while self-driving through the Morro dos Prazeres favela in Rio de Janeiro. Reportedly, the victim was shot after failing to stop his vehicle as instructed by the assailants. This attack underscores the incidental risks violent crime poses to travelers in Rio de Janeiro, and the heightened need to avoid self-driving through risky urban areas.

## **COLOMBIA**

Through December 31, travelers should avoid mosquito bites amid persisting outbreak of yellow fever infections and additional fatalities in Tolima department. Yellow fever is a potentially severe viral illness that spreads via mosquito bites. The symptoms range from a mild, flu-like illness to a severe hemorrhagic fever with organ failure. It can be prevented through vaccination and by avoiding mosquito bites. Vaccination is recommended for most travelers and required for some.

## **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Through December 27, travelers should expect weather-related disruption and exercise caution in northern provinces. The Emergency Operations Centre (COE) has issued a red alert for strong winds, heavy rain and thunderstorms in Puerto Plata province. Yellow alerts have also been issued in Duarte, Espaillat, Hermanas Mirabal, Maria Trinidad Sanchez and Samana provinces. Over 7,000 people have reportedly been displaced by flooding in affected provinces as of December 23. There is potential for rivers to overflow, landslides and short-notice transport disruption in affected areas. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and plan journeys accordingly.

## **ECUADOR**

Through January 18, travelers should exercise caution and follow all official directives amid a national emergency linked to ongoing wildfires. On November 18, authorities implemented the national emergency measures until January 18 in response to wildfires, as well as ongoing water shortages and drought conditions. Emergency services are responding to at least 17 fires across the country as of November 18. There has been extensive damage reported in Alzuay and Loja provinces. Road closures, traffic diversions, and short-notice evacuation orders are possible. Travelers should exercise caution if traveling near the affected areas and abide by all official directives.

## **MEXICO**

Through December 27, travelers should reconfirm flights at Tijuana International Airport due to persistent dense fog. According to official reports, several arrival and departure flights have been canceled or delayed until at least the afternoon of December 25 with the possibility of disruption extending until December 27. Travelers should expect residual delays even after the fog dissipates as airlines attempt to clear the backlog of flights.

Through December 31, travelers should exercise caution and expect heightened security measures in Sinaloa state amid escalating violence between organized criminal groups. Despite the deployment of thousands of additional military personnel to the state in recent weeks, violence has continued unabated. The surge in violence comes amid reported disputes between rival factions of the Sinaloa Cartel. Security operations targeting either faction's leadership could prompt violent reprisals from criminal groups, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

## **PERU**

Through January 11, travelers should expect heightened security measures and follow all official directives in parts of Callao region and Lima province following an extension of the State of Emergency (SoE). The SoE has been extended in one district in the Callao region and 13 districts in Lima province. The extension was implemented on November 27, continuing the SoE initially declared on September 26. Travelers should expect a heightened security force presence in affected districts, travel disruption, and the potential for local disturbances linked to any related demonstrations.

# *Africa & the Middle East*

## **SLEEPING SICKNESS FROM SAFARIS AFFECTS ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE**

Through December 31, travelers should avoid fly bites amid African sleeping sickness infections. Several people have been confirmed to be infected with African sleeping sickness after returning from safaris in Zambia and Zimbabwe. African sleeping sickness can cause fever, headaches, joint pain, skin lesions, and swollen lymph nodes. It can be fatal if left untreated. There is no vaccine, and prevention is by avoiding tsetse fly bites. Travelers should seek prompt medical attention if symptoms appear.

## **SECURITY ALERT TO AFFECT ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

Through December 31, travelers should monitor developments following reports that a ceasefire agreement was reached between Hizbullah and Israel on November 27. Travelers should continue to defer all travel due to the dynamic nature of the security situation and reduced commercial flight availability. In-country travelers should ensure they strictly adhere to robust security precautions. All travel to Israel and the Palestinian Territories should be subject to a comprehensive review.

## **MPOX OUTBREAK**

Latest update: Outbreak ongoing. Mpox infections have been increasing since their initial identification at the end of July. Mpox is a potentially severe viral disease. People can contract the virus from close contact with a sick person or contaminated objects and surfaces. Travelers should prevent infection by following strict hygiene measures and avoiding contact with sick people. Travelers should consult their doctor for an individual recommendation on vaccination.

## **WAR IN ISRAEL**

Travelers should review escalation plans and monitor regional developments after Israel claimed retaliation following Iran's missile attack on October 1. Israel announced it had begun a limited ground operation targeting Shia Muslim movement Hizbullah infrastructure in southern Lebanon. Subsequently, clashes between Hizbullah fighters and the Israeli military were reported on the Israel-Lebanon border on October 2. These developments follow intensified Israeli aerial operations in Lebanon, reportedly targeting more than 2,000 Hizbullah-linked sites. Airstrikes have occurred in Beirut (Lebanon) that killed several Hizbullah senior members, including leader Hassan Nasrallah on September 27.

## **CHAD**

Through December 29, travelers should exercise caution and monitor developments ahead of the December 29 parliamentary, regional and local elections. Political tensions will remain high during campaign events, on polling day and once results are released. Demonstrations are likely to be organized in response to the results, and security forces are liable to use heavy-handed measures to disperse them. Travelers should avoid all gatherings due to the risk of unrest.

## **DR CONGO**

Through December 31, travelers should follow strict hygiene due to a severe illness of unknown cause in Kwango province. Authorities are investigating a cluster of illness reported in Panzi in Kwango province that has affected more than 300 people and resulted in dozens of fatalities. The cause of the illness is yet to be identified, though symptoms include fever, headache, cough, and difficulty breathing. To minimize the risk of any infection, travelers should pay attention to strict hygiene, avoid crowds and funerals, wash hands often, prevent insect bites, and select safe food and water.

Through December 31, travelers should avoid further demonstrations in urban centers linked to planned constitutional changes. Several opposition parties and civil society movements have launched a campaign to denounce the planned constitutional changes. They have called for countrywide demonstrations from December. Meanwhile, a march has been organized in Mbuji-Mayi on December 19 from Star Roundabout to the town hall in support of the constitutional changes. Police are liable to use heavy-handed measures to disperse participants, including tear gas and live ammunition, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

## ISRAEL

Throughout December, travelers should continue to defer non-essential inbound travel to Israel. Those that intend to travel to the country should reconfirm itineraries amid the cancellation by several airlines of operations to and from Israel's Ben Gurion Airport (TLV). Travel to Israel and the Palestinian Territories should be subject to a review.

## MOZAMBIQUE

Through December 27, travelers should minimize non-essential movement as a precaution following a call by opposition leader Venancio Mondlane for renewed protests. Mondlane has called for a nationwide shutdown to be held on December 23, when the Constitutional Council ruling is expected to release its decision on the election results. Demonstrations are likely in Maputo, Matola and other major urban centers following the announcement of the ruling. Previous protests have resulted in unrest, including clashes between protesters and security forces. Further unrest is likely, posing incidental risks to bystanders. Related gatherings have resulted in unrest, during which at least 130 people have reportedly been killed, hundreds injured and thousands arrested. Travelers should be advised against non-essential travel to medium-risk areas of Mozambique until January 31, 2025.

Through January 31, travelers should minimize non-essential movement until December 30 and avoid election-related demonstrations. Renewed protests have taken place across the country since the Constitutional Council's validation of the general election results on December 23. Gatherings have resulted in unrest, looting and clashes with Security forces. Opposition leader Venancio Mondlane has called for countrywide protests and strikes since mid-November over alleged electoral fraud. Related gatherings have resulted in unrest, during which at least 150 people have reportedly been killed, hundreds injured, and thousands arrested. We advise against non-essential travel to MEDIUM-risk areas of Mozambique until January 31, 2025.

## NEW ZEALAND

Through December 29, travelers should plan journeys accounting for weather-related disruption in northeastern areas of North Island. The MetService has issued orange warnings for heavy rainfall of up to five inches across Gisborne region, as well as parts of Bay of Plenty and Hawke's Bay regions. These will be in effect from 09:00 AM local time on December 26 until at least 1:00 PM on December 27. Consequent flooding and landslides are possible in low-lying and mountainous areas, which could lead to short notice travel disruption. Travelers should reconfirm transport schedules and the status of routes prior to setting out, and exercise enhanced caution.

## RWANDA

Travelers should exercise caution and check with medical providers before traveling to Rwanda. According to the CDC, The Republic of Rwanda has confirmed more than 60 cases of Marburg virus disease (Marburg) associated with hospitals in Kigali, including some deaths. This is the country's first Marburg outbreak. Marburg is a rare but severe viral hemorrhagic fever, similar to Ebola, that can cause serious illness and death. Currently, no cases of Marburg related to this outbreak have been reported outside of Rwanda.

## UGANDA

Through December 31, travelers should avoid tick bites and follow hygiene measures following an increase in Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) infections in Kyenjojo district. CCHF is a potentially fatal viral illness. It is transmitted through tick bites, direct contact with infected animals, and from person to person through infected body fluids. Symptoms include flu-like illness, abdominal pain, and bleeding. There is no vaccine. People at risk are those who are exposed to ticks, infected animals, and those caring for infected people. Travelers should prevent infection through avoiding tick bites, avoiding direct contact with animals and their tissues, and avoiding exposure to infected people.

# *Asia & the Pacific*

## **WINTER WEATHER TO AFFECT CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA, TAIWAN**

Through February 2025, travelers should expect intermittent travel disruption in China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan during the winter season. The emergence of La Nina weather phenomenon is forecast to bring colder temperatures and heavier snowfall in Japan. Meanwhile, southern China is likely to see normal to above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation. Heavy snow, dense fog, and poor visibility can result in short-notice disruption to flights and rail services, as well as road closures and an increased risk of road traffic accidents. Snowfall can trigger avalanches in mountainous areas and the collapse of road infrastructure such as bridges.

## **WINTER WEATHER TO AFFECT BANGLADESH, INDIA, AND NEPAL**

Through February 2025, travelers should expect travel disruption and maintain flexible itineraries during the winter season in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. Heavy snowfall, strong winds, dense fog, and poor visibility can cause short-notice disruption to air, rail, road, and ferry travel, as well as seaports. Additionally, air quality across the region typically deteriorates during the season, resulting in smog and travel disruption, which in turn affects supply chains and business continuity. Poor visibility, lack of proper signage/traffic signals, and poorly lit roads exacerbate the risks associated with road travel during the winter season, especially in hilly and mountainous terrain.

## **MONSOON SEASON OVER THE COMING MONTHS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Travelers should expect intermittent disruption to travel and essential services in south and southeast Asia over the coming months during the northeast monsoon season. The season typically begins in mid-October-November and lasts until March-April. Flooding and landslides are possible following periods of heavy rainfall, especially in mountainous and low-lying areas and even major urban centers. The passage of tropical storms is also liable to exacerbate damage and disruption, which is more protracted in rural areas. Travelers should maintain flexible itineraries and liaise with local contacts to reconfirm feasibility of overland journeys prior to setting out.

## **CYCLONE SEASON IN AUSTRALIA, SOUTH PACIFIC UNTIL SPRING 2025**

The Australia and South Pacific cyclone season takes place between November 1 and April 30. Regional meteorological agencies, including the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) in Australia and the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) in New Zealand, have forecast an average number of cyclones during the 2024-25 season. Between six to ten cyclones are forecast in the South Pacific, while 11 cyclones are forecast in Australia. Between three to four cyclones are expected to reach Category 3 or higher across the region. Travelers should maintain flexible itineraries and liaise with local contacts to reconfirm the feasibility of overland journeys prior to setting out.

## **INDIA TRAVEL INSURANCE REQUIREMENT FOR SCHENGEN VISAS**

Throughout 2024, any Indian national in need of a visa from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland as well as the European Union Member States of Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Romania must hold a valid travel insurance policy from an approved vendor. Visa applicants are advised to note that unapproved travel medical insurances issued by Indian insurance companies are not accepted for Schengen visa procedure. However, visa applicants may seek to obtain insurance in any other country where claims against the insurance company would be recoverable in a Schengen State.

## **TENSIONS CONTINUE TO RISE IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

Through January 31, travelers should monitor developments in the Korean peninsula over the coming weeks and months. The South Korean military has stated that it anticipates a ballistic missile launch by North Korea around an important North Korean workers' meeting to be held by December 31. On December 19, the US and South Korea held exercises to improve air defenses against North Korean drone intrusions. Additionally, both countries have raised concerns regarding increasing military co-operation between North Korea and Russia, evidenced by US intelligence reports noting North Korean casualties in Ukraine. Acts of military posturing and persistent non-kinetic aggression will continue fueling regional tensions.

## AUSTRALIA

On December 27, travelers should follow official directives linked to an active bushfire in the southern Grampians National Park near Mafekin. Several emergency warnings and watch-and-act warnings have been issued for surrounding suburbs. Fire-fighting efforts are ongoing, though Authorities warned residents the fire may Travelers should continue to burn due to the area's dry and rugged terrain. Warnings in affected areas are liable to change at short notice.

Through December 31, travelers should minimize heat exposure and stay well hydrated amid heatwave affecting several areas. Heatwave warnings are in place across parts of New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia states, as well as the Northern Territory. Prolonged exposure to excessive temperatures can pose health risks ranging from relatively mild rashes and sunburn to heat stroke, which is a medical emergency. To prevent heat-related illnesses, travelers should minimize exposure, reduce physical activity, and stay well hydrated. Travelers should know the warning symptoms of heat-linked illnesses and what to do if they develop.

Through December 31, travelers should exercise caution following recent unrelated incidents against the Jewish community and associated institutions. On December 6, a synagogue was set on fire in the Ripponlea neighborhood of Melbourne, during which one person was injured. Authorities have since declared the incident a likely terrorist attack. Although three suspects have been identified, no arrests have been made thus far. On November 21 and December 11, cars were set alight and several properties were sprayed with anti-Israel messages in the Woollahra neighborhood of Sydney. According to authorities, the incidents are unrelated.

## BANGLADESH

Through December 31, travelers should exercise caution while traveling to Bangladesh following the UK's travel advisory on December 3, cautioning against potential terrorist attacks. The advisory states that the attacks could be indiscriminate, including at crowded areas, religious buildings, and political rallies. British nationals have also been advised to avoid large gatherings and locations with a heightened security presence. The advisory comes amid prevailing unrest in Bangladesh, especially after the arrest of Hindu priest Chinmoy Krishna Das on November 25. In addition, the alleged anti-India sentiment and targeting of the minority Hindu community since August 5 underscores the need for caution for Indian-origin travelers and Indian nationals during travel to the country.

Through December 31, travelers should allow additional time while traveling to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC) in Dhaka. The Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited has issued an advisory to use alternative routes due to the ongoing repair work at underground metro near Jamuna Future Park. The work is likely to be completed by 2028. Travelers should plan journeys using alternative routes including Dhaka Elevated Expressway, Mouchak Mogbazar Flyover, and Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue to travel to DAC.

## CHINA

Through December 31, travelers should avoid mosquito bites following an increase in dengue infections in parts of China. Dengue is a viral disease spread through mosquito bites. It can cause a range of symptoms. Fever, headache, and a rash are common. Sometimes, dengue is severe and can have fatal complications. Those who are infants, pregnant, or have had dengue before are most likely to get a severe infection. The main way to prevent dengue is by avoiding mosquito bites. Dengue vaccines are approved in some countries. Travelers should discuss with your healthcare provider if they are recommended for your situation.

## FIJI

Through December 29, travelers should exercise caution and expect weather-related disruption in the country. The Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) has issued a heavy rain warning until at least December 29 amid the passage of two low-pressure systems. Flash flood and strong wind warnings are active for parts of Viti Levu island. Meanwhile, a flash flood alert is active for parts of Vanua Levu island. Continued heavy rain is liable to lead to flooding and landslides, as well as disruption to the power supply and other essential services. Short-notice transport disruption is also possible.

Through December 31, travelers should be aware of risks and choose beverages carefully following illness linked to contaminated alcoholic drinks. Investigations are ongoing. To reduce the risks of poisoning, travelers should be aware of the potential risks of drinks such as spiking or methanol poisoning. Travelers should choose beverages carefully and not leave drinks unattended. Travelers should seek immediate medical attention if symptoms develop.

## INDIA

Through December 27, travelers should avoid a demonstration in Jakarta organized by labor unions and workers' groups. The Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions and the West Java labor unions have called on the event to demand higher minimum wage and the dismissal of a government official. Participants will gather outside the State Palace building. The protest is expected to pass off peacefully, though security forces are liable to use heavy-handed measures to disperse crowds in the event of unrest.

Through December 29, travelers should expect and avoid protests led by opposition parties, mainly allied with the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) political coalition, in major urban centers. Demonstrations are being held to condemn remarks by Home Minister Amit Shah about BR Ambedkar, a famous advocate of the rights of the Dalit community, during the December 17 parliament session. The opposition alleged that Shah's remarks were derogatory and demand his removal from the cabinet. A protest rally will be held in Belgavi by the Congress on December 27. Nationwide protests have been called for by Dalit organizations on December 28 and by left parties on December 30.

Through December 30, travelers should exercise caution and plan journeys accounting for weather-related disruption in Himachal Pradesh state. More than 130 roads, including two national highways, have been disrupted in the state. At least four people have been killed and several others have been injured because of road accidents. Rescue operations were carried out after more than 100 tourists were stranded due to difficult driving conditions between Khangsar and Sissu near Manali on December 25. Electricity outages have also been reported in multiple areas. The India Meteorological Department has forecast further snowfall over the Western Himalayan region from December 27-29.

Through December 30, travelers should plan journeys accounting for disruption amid a farmers' protest at Haryana-Punjab state border points. Farmers have called for a general strike in Punjab on December 30 as a response to authorities for not meeting their demands. Precedent suggests that related demonstrations could get unruly. Police have used tear gas and water cannon on protesting farmers at the Shambhu border crossing, resulting in injuries to more than 30 participants. Travelers should monitor updates related to the protest and follow all official directives.

Through December 31, travelers should plan journeys bypassing a sit-in demonstration near Dorina Crossing in the Esplanade area of Kolkata. Doctors affiliated to multiple organizations, such as the Abhaya Manch and the Joint Platform of Doctors, have sought permission to continue their protest. They are demonstrating over alleged lapses in the investigation process into the sexual assault of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Hospital in August. The event is likely to be well attended and peaceful; however, in the event of disturbances, the demonstration will be forcibly dispersed by Authorities.

Travelers should defer all travel to Manipur state until further notice and in-state workforce should minimize non-essential movement. Authorities have imposed a curfew in Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Kakching and Thoubal districts following widespread violence during protests over the abduction and killing of six Meitei community locals. Curfew relaxations are being announced daily, depending on the security situation, to help locals access essentials. On December 9, the state government restored mobile internet and data services in Bishnupur, Churachandpur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Jiribam, Kakching, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl and Thoubal districts.

Through December 31, travelers should abide by official directives related to rising air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR). Authorities have enforced Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), restricting non-compliant vehicles and banning non-essential construction. This is the highest level of the GRAP reflecting a significant rise in the Air Quality Index (AQI) which crossed the 450 mark late on December 16. AQI levels in the NCR are expected to worsen over the coming weeks due to adverse meteorological conditions. Travelers should expect disruption to flights, rail services, and road journeys due to low visibility caused by heavy smog.



Through December 31, travelers should continue to defer all travel to Manipur state. Authorities have imposed a curfew in Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Kakching, and Thoubal districts following widespread violence during protests over the abduction and killing of six Meitei community locals. Curfew relaxations are being announced daily, depending on the security situation, to help locals access essentials. Broadband services were conditionally restored in Bishnupur, Churachandpur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Jiribam, Kakching, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl, and Thoubal districts; however, mobile internet services remain suspended until 5:15 PM local time on December 3. Travelers in Manipur should minimize non-essential movement.

## INDONESIA

On December 27, travelers should avoid a planned protest in Jakarta. Multiple groups, including university students, will gather near Arjuna Wijaya Statue at 3:00 PM local time to denounce a proposed increase in value added tax to 12%. Participants are expected to march towards the Istana Negara. Authorities have increased security and implemented road closures from the statue roundabout towards the Istana Negara. Travelers should plan journeys bypassing the area. Related protests on December 26 were forcibly dispersed by Security forces.

Through December 27, travelers should expect and avoid further protests across urban centers over a corruption case related to a former politician. On December 23, a protest outside the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) building in Jakarta turned unruly and escalated into vandalism and clashes with security forces. Protesters have called for the arrest of Harun Masiku, a former member of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, for allegedly bribing the election commission to secure a seat at the House of Representatives. Similar violent protests can be expected and may pose incidental risks to bystanders and cause localized travel disruption. Flashpoints in Jakarta include the KPK building, the State Palace, the House of Representatives complex, National Monument and Arjuna statue.

## JAPAN

Through December 31, travelers should pay attention to hygiene following an increase in parvovirus B19 infections in the country. Parvovirus B19 is a contagious viral infection that typically causes mild illness, such as flu-like symptoms, rashes, and joint pain. It can cause serious complications in some groups such as those with weak immune systems, or certain blood disorders, or pregnant people. Travelers should prevent infection by practicing good hygiene.

## MYANMAR

Throughout 2024, sustained fighting involving the military, ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and anti-government People's Defence Force (PDF) groups persists in conflict zones. Hostilities have increased since June 25 when a coalition of EAOs renewed a military offensive. On August 25, an alliance of resistance forces took control of Thabeikkyi in town (Mandalay region). On August 31, one person was killed and at least four others injured during bombings carried out by military jets. A bombing also took place in a monastery in Maungdaw township (Maungdaw district) on September 1. Earlier, on July 25, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) claimed to have captured the military's north-eastern regional command headquarters in Lashio (Shan state). Meanwhile, some residents of Pyinoolwin (Mandalay region) have fled, anticipating an escalation in the conflict. Travelers should expect further fighting through the end of the year, highlighting the need to defer all travel to conflict zones.

## NEPAL

Through March 31, 2025, travelers should reconfirm flight itineraries due to scheduled airport closures at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM). The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal has announced that the airport will be closed daily from 10:00 PM-8:00 AM local time due to planned maintenance and airport expansion works.

## NEW ZEALAND

Through December 30, travelers should plan journeys accounting for weather-related disruptions in northeastern areas of North Island. The MetService has issued orange warnings for heavy rainfall of up to five inches across Gisborne region, as well as parts of Bay of Plenty and Hawke's Bay regions. These will be in effect from 09:00 AM local time on December 26 until at least 1:00 PM on December 27. Consequent flooding and landslides are possible in low-lying and mountainous areas, which could lead to short notice travel disruption. Travelers should reconfirm transport schedules and the status of routes prior to setting out, and exercise enhanced caution.

## PAKISTAN

On December 27, travelers should avoid demonstrations planned by the Shia Ulema Council due to the risk of unrest. Events will be held in several urban centers, including Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. Participants are gathering to address the ongoing sectarian violence in Parachinar and present their 11-point demand list. The demonstrations will be held after the Friday prayers, while a sit-in in Lahore has been ongoing for several days. The events are likely to attract significant turnouts and could be forcibly dispersed by Police. Travelers should expect heightened security measures and travel disruption near the demonstrations.

Through December 31, travelers should minimize exposure to poor air quality in several urban centers as air-pollution related illnesses rise. Poor air quality has been recorded in several cities in Punjab and Sindh provinces. Polluted air can cause symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and irritation of the eyes and nose. Young children, the elderly, pregnant people, and people with underlying heart and lung diseases are particularly vulnerable. Travelers should lessen the risk of potential health problems by reducing exposure.

## PHILIPPINES

Through December 31, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) has directed the authorities in Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon and Ilocos regions to prepare earthquake and tsunami evacuation plans. This follows a series of offshore earthquakes recorded along the Manila Trench by the Philippines Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) on December 17-20. The OCD has advised the local authorities to review contingency plans, identify gaps and areas for improvement, create evacuation plans and designate evacuation centers, especially for coastal areas. Travelers should ensure awareness with local disaster warning systems and responses. Organizations should ensure corporate crisis management and business continuity plans are in place.

Through January 2, travelers should expect heightened security in Metro Manila and other key urban centers during the Christmas and New Year holiday period. The opening times of shopping centers in Metro Manila have been moved back by one hour to 11:00 local time until December 30, in a bid to reduce traffic congestion. Security will be tight at such facilities, as well as other large public venues and places of worship, to mitigate the risks associated with crime and terrorism. Additional patrols, checkpoints, and spot-checks will be instituted at airports and other transport hubs, hotels, shopping centers, tourist spots, and entertainment venues.

## SOUTH KOREA

Through December 28, travelers should monitor developments linked to the Constitutional Court hearing from December 27 on President Yoon Suk-yeol's impeachment. Protests calling for his swift removal continue, including daily demonstrations in Seoul and a march planned at 5:00 PM local time on December 28 towards the Constitutional Court. Related gatherings have been well attended and peaceful but have caused significant localized disruption and should be avoided as a precaution. The opposition will vote on an impeachment motion against acting president Han Duck-soo on December 27. This follows his refusal to accept nominations for the Constitutional Court and promulgate special counsel bills against Yoon Suk-yeol and his wife.

Starting September 1, 2024, the Republic of Korea (ROK) government has mandated that travelers who have visited, stayed, or transited through certain regions, including certain U.S. States (Colorado, Michigan, and Texas), must submit a Q-CODE or health declaration form upon entering South Korea. Please review the complete list at the U.S. Embassy & Consulate in the Republic of Korea official website of locations that require a Q-CODE or health declaration form when entering Korea.

## TAJIKISTAN

Through December 31, travelers should expect disruption amid nationwide electricity shortages and rationing. Authorities announced rolling blackouts from September 22, a month earlier than the usual schedule of winter restrictions. They said the decision was due to shortages at hydroelectric power plants, including the Nurek hydroelectric dam, and a fast-growing population. The measures will affect all essential services, including official governmental facilities. Rationing is worse in rural areas but will also impact Dushanbe. Severe weather conditions are likely to cause unexpected additional shortages.

## THAILAND

Through December 31, travelers should expect disruption in flood-affected areas of southern Thailand due to ongoing relief efforts. Heavy rainfall since November has caused major flooding and associated disruption across the southern provinces of Chumphon, Krabi, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Narathiwat, Pattani, Phatthalung, Satun, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Trang and Yala. Associated landslides, mudslides and rapid water flows in valleys near waterways and low-lying areas have also been reported; however, water levels have reportedly started to recede in most areas, except in Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani. At least 37 people have been killed in flood-related incidents this monsoon season. Travelers should follow all official directives and allow additional time for journeys.

Through December 31, travelers should minimize exposure to poor air quality in Bangkok and surrounding areas. Polluted air can cause symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and irritation of the eyes and nose. Young children, the elderly, pregnant people, and people with underlying heart and lung diseases are particularly vulnerable. Travelers should lessen the risk of potential health problems by reducing exposure.

Through January 19, 2025, travelers should exercise caution if traveling to southern Thailand. On December 21, a pipe bomb was thrown at the Border patrol police base in Bura Pue (Narathiwat province), injuring four officers. Earlier, on November 10, a pipe bomb was thrown at the Nam Dam police station (Thung Yang Daeng district, Pattani province). The incidents follow the extension by the government of a state of emergency (SoE) in the three southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala until January 19, 2025. The SoE allows detention without charge for up to 30 days. These developments highlight the persistent risk posed by the ongoing southern separatist insurgency. Through January 19, travelers should defer travel in Southern provinces of Thailand. Three security guards on December 24 were injured in a bomb attack and subsequent shoot-out in Si Sakhon sub-district. On the previous day, three members of the Volunteer Defense Corps were injured when a bomb struck their patrol near Ban Phlong School in Paluru. These developments highlight the persistent risk posed by the ongoing southern separatist insurgency. The government has extended a state of emergency (SoE) in the three southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala until January 19, 2025. Under the SoE, suspects can be detained without charge for up to 30 days.

## VANUATU

On December 27, travelers can resume travel to Vanuatu with stringent security precautions, including ensuring access to essential supplies and suitability of accommodation, as post-earthquake recovery efforts. Water supply has been restored to most parts of Port Vila. The sea-cable network has been partially restored, though full internet connectivity will likely only return by December 30. Commercial flights from the capital's Bauerfield International Airport (VLI) resumed on December 22 and the state of emergency expired on December 24. As recovery efforts persist, accommodation options are limited, and essential supplies are likely to be rationed in the coming days.

## VIETNAM

Through December 31, travelers should exercise caution and expect disruption during the passage of a former tropical storm which has now weakened to a tropical depression. According to the National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting (NCHMF), the weather system is moving southwestwards over the South China Sea towards southern Vietnam. The NCHMF has forecast heavy rainfall until December 25 in areas, including Da Nang municipality, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa, Phu Yen, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Quang Tri provinces and Central Highlands region. Travelers should reconfirm transport schedules and the status of routes before setting out.

# Europe

## WAR IN ISRAEL TO PROMPT PROTEST

Throughout December, travelers should expect disruption and heightened security during demonstrations linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian activists have regularly assembled at major gathering points, transport hubs, government buildings, and university campuses. Scuffles occasionally occur. Although most such demonstrations take place in Canada and the US, they are periodically held elsewhere in the region.

## FRANCE

Travelers should expect heightened security at all border crossings in France following the reintroduction of increased checks. Government officials have announced that border controls will be imposed at all border crossings with Schengen country members: Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, and Switzerland. The measures will stay in place from November 1, 2024, until April 1, 2025, with the possibility of an extension.

Through December 31, travelers should defer all travel to Mayotte until further notice following the passage of Intense Tropical Cyclone Chido. The weather system, which dissipated on December 17, briefly made landfall in Mayotte on December 14. At least 39 people were killed and more than 4,000 others injured, though these numbers could rise significantly in the coming days. On December 17, an indefinite nightly curfew was imposed in response to reports of theft and looting. Dzaoudzi-Pamandzi International Airport has suspended all operations until further notice following damage to its control tower. Internal travel and communications options have been severely affected.

## GERMANY

Through December 29, travelers should expect and avoid further demonstrations in Magdeburg (Saxony-Anhalt state) linked to a fatal car-ramming attack. On December 20, a car drove into a Christmas market, killing at least five people and injuring 235 others. On December 23, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party held a demonstration at Cathedral Square, attracting around 3,500 people. A well-attended counterdemonstration took place simultaneously at the Old Market. On December 21, scuffles erupted between far-right protesters and police during a related demonstration. Further localized scuffles involving rival protesters and police are likely, posing incidental risks to bystander.

## MOLDOVA

Through February 14, travelers should monitor developments and follow official directives amid an ongoing State of Emergency (SoE). The SoE, effective from December 16, was declared after Russian energy provider Gazprom, Moldova's main supplier, announced it would not renew the contract transiting through Ukraine, set to expire on December 31. Expected Russian gas cutoffs are likely to impact Moldova's capacity to generate adequate energy for heating and electricity. Subsequently, the issue may prompt demonstrations in the coming weeks, particularly in Chisinau, with flashpoints including government buildings, the Ministry of Energy, and public squares.

## NETHERLANDS

Starting December 9, 2024, travelers should expect heightened security at all border crossings in the Netherlands following a re-introduction of increased checks. Government officials have announced that the aforementioned measures will be implemented at border crossings with neighboring Schengen countries Belgium and Germany. The measures will stay in place until June 8, 2025.

## PORTUGAL

Through December 31, travelers should reconfirm the status of flights and expect disruption during a 24-hour strike by baggage handlers. Workers will also observe an overtime ban from December 24 until January 1. The industrial action is being held to demand increased salaries. Affected airports include Faro Airport, Madeira Airport, Lisbon's Airport, Porto Airport and Porto Santo Airport. Travelers should expect delays and cancellations during the strike and reconfirm the status of flights prior to setting out.

## **RUSSIA**

The US Department of State advises US citizens to defer travel to Russia due to the invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces, the potential for harassment against US citizens by Russian government security officials, the singling out of US citizens in Russia by Russian government security officials including for detention, the arbitrary enforcement of local law, limited flights into and out of Russia, the Embassy's limited ability to assist US citizens in Russia, COVID-19-related restrictions, and terrorism. US citizens residing or traveling in Russia should depart immediately and exercise increased caution due to wrongful detentions. US credit and debit cards no longer work in Russia, and options to electronically transfer funds from the United States are extremely limited as a result of sanctions imposed on Russian banks. There are reports of cash shortages within Russia.

## **SERBIA**

Through December 29, travelers should expect further anti-government demonstrations in urban centers. Protesters hold the government responsible for the roof collapse at the Novi Sad railway station on November 1, which killed 15 people. On December 25, students will hold a march in Belgrade starting from 11:30 Am local time at the junction of Kneza Milosa and Nemanjina Streets and proceeding towards the Public Prosecutor's Office. Although associated gatherings should pass off peacefully, there is potential for localized scuffles between participants and police.

## **SPAIN**

Through December 29, travelers should expect localized disruption in Madrid during a demonstration over migration policy. Participants will gather at 5:00 PM local time at Plaza Eliptica before marching towards the Madrid Immigration Detention Centre building. While the event should pass off peacefully, it is likely to be accompanied by a heightened security force presence and may disrupt nearby traffic. Travelers should plan journeys accounting for associated disruption and reconfirm the status of routes before setting out.

## **SWEDEN**

Through December 31, travelers should select safe food and follow hygiene measures following salmonellosis outbreak. While the source of infection remains unidentified, the outbreak is suspected to be linked to a common source. Symptoms of Salmonella infection usually arise between 12 to 72 hours after exposure, including fever, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Occasionally, severe illness can occur. Travelers should prevent infection by selecting safe food and following food safety practices when preparing food.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

On December 27, travelers should reconfirm flight schedules and expect disruption at Manchester Airport amid adverse weather conditions. Reports indicate several flights have been delayed due to low visibility caused by heavy fog. Residual disruption is likely even after the weather improves as airlines clear the backlog of flights.