



# INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (INSUM)

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GLOBAL TRAVEL THREATS  
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# INSUM REPORT | United States of America (USA) and Worldwide

## THREATS AND VIOLENCE IN THE GLOBAL TRAVEL LANDSCAPE FOR U.S. CITIZENS

TRAVEL ADVISORY | TERRORISM & CRIME

### The Current and Escalating Threats and Violence Globally That Can Impact Travel Abroad For U.S. Citizens.

As of April 2025, the global security environment presents heightened risks for U.S. citizens abroad. Armed conflicts, organized criminal activity, state-sponsored detentions, aviation security threats, and outbreaks of infectious diseases continue to disrupt international travel.

Key threats include:

- Extreme instability in regions such as Haiti, Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, and parts of Africa.
- A marked increase in GPS signal interference impacting aviation safety across Eastern Europe and the Baltic region.
- Elevated violent crime rates in tourist destinations like Turks and Caicos and Trinidad and Tobago.
- Health emergencies due to the spread of mpox, dengue fever, and the Oropouche virus.

At the same time, some improvements in security conditions — notably in El Salvador and Colombia's major cities — provide expanded options for travel under cautious circumstances.

### Strategic Priority:

All U.S. citizens traveling internationally should remain alert, prepared for sudden changes in security conditions, and registered with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

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## TRAVEL ADVISORIES & NOTICES

### High-Risk Destinations (Level 4: Do Not Travel)

Travel to these regions is strongly discouraged due to life-threatening risks. U.S. government assistance may be severely limited or unavailable.

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| Country                        | Key Threats  | Additional Details  |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Haiti                          | Armed gang violence, kidnappings, critical shortages of supplies | Gang coalitions control key roads and ports. Over 2,500 kidnappings reported in 2024.         |
| Afghanistan                    | Terrorism, wrongful detention, internal conflict                 | ISIS-K attacks ongoing. Taliban restrictions on movement worsen humanitarian crisis.          |
| Syria                          | Active conflict, chemical weapons risk, terrorism                | Limited healthcare; potential for abduction by armed groups.                                  |
| Ukraine                        | Warzone conditions, missile attacks, landmines                   | Missile strikes continue into western regions. Over 200 civilian casualties reported monthly. |
| Russia                         | Arbitrary detention of U.S. citizens, civil unrest               | Political protests increasingly suppressed; GPS jamming documented near border areas.         |
| Iran                           | Wrongful detention, political tensions                           | U.S.-Iranian dual nationals face arrest without trial; diplomatic interventions limited.      |
| Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Myanmar | Ongoing armed conflicts  | No reliable infrastructure; risks of terrorism and abduction.                                 |

**Special Note:** In all these regions, commercial flight availability may cease suddenly in a crisis, trapping travelers without safe exit options.

### Elevated-Risk Destinations (Level 2–3: Reconsider Travel / Exercise Increased Caution)

Significant threats exist, although travelers may mitigate risks with enhanced precautions.

| Destination                        | Threat Type                  | Expanded Details   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Trinidad and Tobago                | Terrorism, violent crime     | State of Emergency extended through mid-2025; over 500 kidnappings reported since 2024.          |
| Turks and Caicos                   | Violent crime                | Homicide rate exceeds 76.5 per 100,000. Tourists targeted in resorts and public beaches.         |
| Mexico (Selective regions)         | Cartel violence, kidnappings | States like Sinaloa, Michoacán, and Zacatecas remain exceptionally dangerous.                    |
| Eastern Europe / Baltics           | Cyber/aviation security      | 400+ confirmed incidents of GPS spoofing affecting civilian aviation between January–March 2025. |
| South Africa                       | Violent urban crime          | Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town report spike in armed robberies of tourists.                 |
| Israel and Palestinian Territories | Terrorism, civil unrest      | Escalating violence; increased rocket fire into southern and central Israel.                     |

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## Destinations with Improved Security Conditions (Level 1–2: Exercise Normal or Increased Caution)

Encouraging improvements have been noted, but vigilance remains necessary.

- **El Salvador:**  
Homicide rates have fallen by over 90% compared to 2018 levels. Major cities now considered safer, though minor petty crime persists.
- **Colombia:**  
Medellín and Bogotá have improved police presence and community policing initiatives. Remote regions (especially near Venezuela) remain hazardous.
- **Vietnam, Thailand:**  
Despite isolated incidents of civil unrest, both countries continue to offer generally safe environments for U.S. travelers.

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## HEALTH-RELATED GLOBAL TRAVEL THREATS

| Disease                                    | Affected Regions                         | Expanded Details  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Mpox (Clade I strain)</b>               | Central and Eastern Africa               | Higher mortality strain; CDC recommends vaccine for travelers to outbreak zones.    |
| <b>Oropouche Virus</b>                     | Brazil, Panama                           | Mosquito-borne; causes fever, rash, and severe joint pain. No vaccine available.    |
| <b>Dengue Fever</b>                        | Latin America, Caribbean, Southeast Asia | 2025 outbreak largest since 2019; recommend mosquito protection measures.           |
| <b>Polio (circulating vaccine-derived)</b> | Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan           | Proof of recent polio vaccination may be required for travelers from these regions. |

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## AVIATION TRAVEL THREATS

Aviation remains a critical area of vulnerability due to the convergence of cyberwarfare, geopolitical conflict, and infrastructure sabotage. Travelers should remain aware of disruptions, restricted airspace, and targeted attacks that impact both commercial and private flights.

### Current and Emerging Threats

| Region                             | Type of Threat         | Expanded Details  |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Eastern Europe / Baltic Sea</b> | GPS jamming & spoofing | Over <b>400 confirmed incidents</b> in early 2025 have disrupted flight paths. NATO and IATA warn of potential mid-air navigational failures. Areas affected: Poland, Lithuania, Finland, Black Sea corridor. |

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| Region                                       | Type of Threat                           | Expanded Details  |
|--|--|---|
| Middle East<br>(Lebanon,<br>Israel, Red Sea) | Drone & missile threats                  | Houthi-aligned drone attacks on airports and commercial aircraft have increased, especially over the Red Sea. Airspace over southern Israel is intermittently restricted. |
| Russia &<br>Border Zones                     | Airspace closures & electronic warfare   | Russian radar jamming and SAM threats near Ukrainian and Finnish borders have forced route diversions. U.S. carriers avoid trans-Russia paths.                            |
| Asia-Pacific<br>(South China Sea)            | Military intercepts & contested airspace | Chinese fighters have intercepted U.S.-aligned surveillance aircraft near Taiwan. Tensions may result in misidentification or escalation.                                 |
| West Africa<br>(Nigeria, Ghana)              | Airport perimeter breaches               | Armed robberies and sabotage reported at Lagos and Accra airports; night operations particularly vulnerable.  |
| South America<br>(Peru, Colombia)            | Laser pointer & drone interference       | Civil aviation authorities report rising cases of cockpit laser strikes and unauthorized drones near urban airports.  |

### Additional Aviation Risks

- **Cyberthreats to air traffic control (ATC):**  
Multiple regions, including Southeast Asia and parts of Europe, have reported phishing attacks and ransomware targeting flight dispatch and ATC systems.
- **Civil unrest disrupting airport operations:**  
Protests in **France, Argentina, and Sri Lanka** have led to airport closures, mass delays, and violent encounters with authorities.
- **Aircraft sabotage/theft in conflict zones:**  
In Libya and Sudan, factions have seized commercial aircraft and repurposed them for military use. Civil aviation is impossible in these zones.
- **Radiation risk on polar routes:**  
Due to heightened solar flare activity forecast for mid-2025, FAA is monitoring cosmic radiation exposure on polar flights, especially over the Arctic and North Atlantic.

### Safety Recommendations for Air Travelers

- **Monitor NOTAMs (Notice to Air Missions)** for all flight legs.
- **Avoid transiting** countries with active airspace conflicts (e.g., Ukraine, Syria, Yemen).
- **Use direct flights** where possible to reduce exposure to risky layover regions.
- **Check ICAO and IATA advisories** for updated global flight path alerts.
- **Confirm travel insurance** includes delay, rerouting, and emergency repatriation coverage due to airspace closures.

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## MARITIME TRAVEL THREATS

Global maritime travel is increasingly affected by piracy, armed robbery, geopolitical tensions,



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and port insecurity. U.S. citizens engaging in cruise travel, yachting, or commercial shipping must take heightened precautions.

### High-Risk Maritime Regions

| Region                                 | Primary Threats                       | Details   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Gulf of Guinea (West Africa)</b>    | Piracy, armed robbery, kidnapping     | Attacks increasingly target offshore vessels; Nigeria and Benin coastlines are high-risk. |
| <b>Red Sea / Gulf of Aden</b>          | Drone attacks, piracy                 | Recent Houthi drone strikes on commercial ships; naval escorts active near Yemen.         |
| <b>Strait of Hormuz / Persian Gulf</b> | State interference, vessel seizures   | Iran has seized multiple Western-aligned vessels in 2024–2025.                            |
| <b>Caribbean (Venezuela adjacent)</b>  | Piracy, armed robbery                 | Criminals targeting yachts and fishing vessels off Venezuela, Trinidad, and Grenada.      |
| <b>South China Sea</b>                 | Naval tensions, aggressive intercepts | Disputed maritime claims have led to confrontations near Philippines, Vietnam.            |

### Cruise Travel Considerations

- **Health risks:** Norovirus, COVID-19 variants, and foodborne illness remain persistent concerns aboard large cruise ships.
- **Port security:** Some Caribbean and Central American ports suffer from weak law enforcement and opportunistic theft targeting cruise passengers.
- **Insurance gaps:** Many policies exclude piracy or evacuation from international waters—travelers should verify coverage specifics.

### Safety Recommendations for Maritime Travelers

- **Consult U.S. Coast Guard MARAD Advisories** and U.S. Maritime Administration for current vessel risk guidance.
- **Avoid overnight anchoring** in unsecured ports or known piracy zones.
- **Track real-time maritime alerts** via Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) or the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA).
- **Register voyage details** with the U.S. Embassy if sailing near high-risk zones.
- **Secure satellite communications** in case of emergency beyond coastal coverage.

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## DOMESTIC ADVISORY UPDATES

While this briefing focuses primarily on international threats, domestic advisories have also been updated in light of emerging risks:

- **U.S. Southern Border Regions:** Travelers near Texas, Arizona, and California border zones are advised to avoid isolated areas due to ongoing cartel violence and migrant smuggling operations.

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- **Major Urban Centers (e.g., New York, Chicago, San Francisco):** Remain alert in public transportation hubs and major events due to increased threats of mass casualty incidents and political protests.
  - **Natural Disaster Season Alerts:**
    - **Tornado Watch (Midwest/Southeast):** Severe storm systems are forecasted for May–June.
    - **Hurricane Season:** Begins June 1; FEMA and NOAA warn of higher-than-average storm activity for the Gulf and Atlantic coasts.
  - **Rail & Transit Security:** Increased TSA patrols and inspections are in place in response to recent security breaches in Northeast Amtrak routes.
  - **Cyber Threats to Utilities & Infrastructure:** DHS has issued alerts concerning ransomware threats to public services in several U.S. states including Texas, Florida, and Michigan.
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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. CITIZENS

- **Enroll in STEP:** Stay connected to the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate.
  - **Prepare an Emergency Plan:** Include evacuation routes, alternative communication methods, and a backup passport copy.
  - **Secure Travel Insurance:** Ensure coverage includes emergency medical evacuation and political evacuation services.
  - **Carry Local Emergency Contacts:** Know how to reach U.S. Consulates, local hospitals, and trusted contacts.
  - **Avoid High-Risk Areas:** Consult regional security assessments before excursions.
  - **Maintain Situational Awareness:** Monitor media and U.S. State Department updates daily during travel.
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## CONCLUSION

In 2025, global travel conditions for U.S. citizens remain highly volatile due to a convergence of armed conflicts, rising crime, health crises, cyber and aviation threats, and maritime insecurity. While some countries are stabilizing, others are experiencing rapid deterioration in safety and infrastructure.

The U.S. Department of State strongly advises all travelers to stay informed, exercise heightened caution, and prepare contingency plans prior to departure. Risk levels can shift rapidly in today's geopolitical climate — proactive awareness, proper documentation, insurance, and enrollment in STEP can mean the difference between safety and vulnerability abroad.

**Travel is not without risk — but informed travel is empowered travel.**

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*Approved by:**G2 Department, Intelligence  
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