

Morocco - OVERVIEW

Updated: February 10, 2014



Country Name Long Form: Kingdom of Morocco

Government Type: Constitutional Monarchy

Languages Spoken: Arabic, Berber, French

National Flag



Morocco is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Morocco					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at MEDIUM

Demonstrations occur frequently in Morocco and are typically focused on political or social issues. During periods of heightened regional tension, large demonstrations may take place in the major cities. By law, all demonstrations require a government permit, but spontaneous unauthorized demonstrations, which have greater potential for violence can, occur.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as MEDIUM

The most notable terrorist group in the region is al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). To date, AQIM has not demonstrated the ability to establish a foothold in Morocco.

Morocco does have an element of domestic terrorism. The primary focus of these groups is on Moroccan government institutions and secondarily on Western and U.S. interests.

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RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Morocco a score of 37, indicating that the country has moderate level of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in their public sector, with the least corrupt country receiving a maximum score of 100.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as MEDIUM

In general, crime does not pose a significant threat to Americans visiting or working in Morocco. Crime is generally higher in areas where there is a high concentration of people and tourists.

Petty crime is the most prevalent type of crime in Morocco, and is generally comprised of bag-snatching and other opportunistic theft. Additionally, theft of jewelry or other valuable items continues to be reported. Common locations for petty crime occur in major urban areas and tourist locations, in particular beaches, markets, other shopping complexes and lower income areas. Individuals thought to be responsible for such crimes operate independently and are generally from lower income areas.

Instances of violent crime, such as assault or homicide are rare; however, when they do occur assailants commonly utilize weapons to commit armed robbery or assault. There has been a risk in violent crime, especially in more urban environments such as Casablanca. This increase has been attributed to the growing income disparity and poorer economic conditions. In addition, levels of both petty and violent crime are elevated in more remote areas including Tata, Zagora and Arfoud.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnappings are not prevalent in Morocco, but there have been a number of abductions of Westerners by terrorist in the West African Sahel, particularly in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and the southern desert regions of Algeria. The threat of kidnapping Morocco stems from Islamist militants operating throughout North Africa, including AQIM. AQIM and other terrorist groups use kidnapping extensively as a means of financing operations and have targeted Western nationals in the past.

Other motives for kidnapping include personal disputes as well as kidnapping in connection with sexual assault. No instances of foreign nationals being targeted for kidnapping have been reported in Morocco since 2011; however the general risk of kidnapping exacerbated by regional threats still exists and should not be discounted.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Verbal or sexual harassment of women are commonly reported; these offenses are presenting nationwide and often target women walking alone and in the evening hours. While associated violence does not often result from such encounters, sexual assault following such harassment is a concern.

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NATURAL DISASTERS

Morocco is located in an active seismic zone and the northern mountainous region is subject to periodic earthquakes. Although these are generally minor, more serious quakes do occasionally occur. Most regions in Morocco have a Mediterranean climate, which becomes more extreme in the interior between June and September when temperatures can reach between 30 and 40 degrees Celsius. Morocco's rainy season extends from November to March and severe flash floods are common during this period, especially in the High Atlas valley mountainous areas.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- Intercity travel after dark anywhere in should be avoided.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking.
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and to not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your food, drinks or belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

Important Contact Details

International Dialing Code: +212

International Dialing Prefix: 00

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Victims of crime in should contact the following phone numbers for assistance

POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is: 15

Note: Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- The infrastructure present in major cities, such as Rabat, Casablanca, Fez and Marrakesh are better developed than in smaller, more rural areas of the country.
- Road networks are generally in good condition.
- More rural roads, including secondary roads and roadways near the Western Sahara and Algerian border regions can be less developed and may lack proper maintenance.
- The country’s telecommunication networks are well developed in large cities though in rural areas telecommunications may be limited.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No use of ATM after dark.
- No rural travel after dark.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No bathing or swimming in rivers.

HEALTH

Morocco has adequate medical care is available in the larger cities, such as Rabat and Casablanca but is limited in rural and outlying areas. Immediate emergency assistance, specialized care and medication may not be readily available. French and Arabic are primarily used in medical facilities in Morocco. Vaccinations are recommended against Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, Polio, Rabies, and Tetanus, Diphtheria. There is also a very limited malaria risk in rural areas of Chefchaouen province.

- Tap water in Morocco is generally not safe to drink. Travelers are advised to consume only sterilized or bottled water. This applies to water used for brushing teeth, making ice or washing foods.
- Beaches near Casablanca are polluted and unsafe for swimming.
- Pasteurized milk can normally be found in major cities, hotels and resorts.
- Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.
- Fruits and vegetables should only be consumed if they have been peeled or cooked.
- Undercooked meat and fish should not be consumed.
- Food from street vendors should be avoided as this carries a higher risk of causing infection.

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The following vaccinations are recommended or required if traveling to Morocco:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended for travelers at high risk of animal bites)
- Typhoid (recommended)

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, varicella (chickenpox), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

SIGNIFICANT DISEASES –

- **Malaria** – A life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes. There is a limited malarial risk in the rural areas of Chefchaouen province.
- **Diarrhea** – A common illness among travelers in the country and can be caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites. One of the most common causes is a bacterium known as E. coli, which is transmitted by ingesting contaminated food and liquids.
- **Schistosomiasis** – A parasitic infection contracted when swimming in bodies of water contaminated with human feces and urine. The problem exists across the country.
- **Brucellosis** – An infection that affects domestic and wild animals and is spread to humans through consumption of unpasteurized milk. The disease can occur throughout the country.
- **Tick-borne relapsing fever** – A bacterial disease transmitted by ticks that causes recurring episodes of fever. Rural areas are worst affected.
- **West Nile Virus** – A viral infection of the brain transmitted by mosquitoes. The disease usually occurs in late summer or early autumn, and the risk extends throughout Morocco.
- **Lymphatic Filariasis** -A disease spread by mosquitoes that causes the enlargement of certain body parts. The disease can occur throughout the country.
- **Onchocerciasis** – An infection caused by a parasitic worm spread by the bite of an infected black fly. The risk is highest in rural areas near fast-running streams.

HOSPITALS –

Clinique Agdal
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Avenue Ibn Sina Quartier de l'Agdal
Rabat
10100
Tel: +212 (0)5 37 677 777
Fax: +212 (0)5 37 677 711
Email: <http://clinique-agdal.com/>

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50 Bd Abderrahim Bouabid
Casablanca
Tel: +212 (0)2 223 1818 / +212 (0)2 223 5064
Fax: +212 (0)2 223 5028

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

UNITED STATES EMBASSY

2 Avenue de Mohamed El Fassi
Rabat, Morocco
Tel: +212 (0) 537 762 265
Fax: +212 (0) 537 765 661
Email: acsacasablanca@state.gov

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.