

Sao Paulo, Brazil - OVERVIEW

Updated: February 6, 2014



Country Name Long Form: Federative Republic of Brazil

Government Type: Federal Republic

Languages Spoken: Portuguese, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, English

National Flag



Sao Paulo is a Tier II City. Significant security measures are necessary.

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

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at HIGH

Political violence in the form of protests occurs throughout Brazil – especially in the capital and major cities. The threat of political violence remains a possibility, as Sao Paulo periodically hosts public demonstrations. While the vast majority of these protests are peaceful, violence can flare up, resulting in disturbances, property damage, and increased police activity.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as LOW

There are no known indigenous terrorist groups operating in Brazil. Brazil is a non-aligned country with no significant enemies and is not targeted by any known radical groups.

RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

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The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Brazil a score of 42, 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.

Corruption remains a serious concern throughout Brazil as of early 2014. The police force is often accused of being corrupt, with the most frequently reported offenses being the solicitation of bribes, particularly from foreign travelers. Security forces have also been accused of more serious crimes, including the use of excessive force and extrajudicial killings.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as **CRITICAL**

Much of Sao Paulo's crime and violence can be attributed to street gangs and organized crime groups operating throughout the state. Sao Paulo continues to experience violent crimes such as murder, rape, kidnappings, armed assaults, and burglaries. All neighborhoods within the city of Sao Paulo are susceptible to crime. There are daily reports of armed robberies that occur regularly in the affluent residential sections of Jardims, Morumbi, Camp Belo, and Moema where a number of government and business leaders and a majority of the U.S. Consulate employees reside.

KIDNAPPING

The majority of kidnappings in Sao Paulo are "expressed kidnappings." Express kidnappings occur when criminals force their kidnapped victims to extract their daily cash limited from an ATM or hold them hostage while they use their credit cards until they are deactivated.

Virtual kidnappings are reported and are one of the most common scams perpetrated by criminals in Sao Paulo. In this scam, criminals make a random telephone call to an unsuspecting family, claiming that a family member has been abducted. They invariably demand a ransom. In reality, no family member has been taken, but the criminals often manage to elicit important information from distraught family, taking advantage of their emotional state to generate a ransom payment. In some cases, the criminals play recordings in the background of children or others crying to help.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assaults do occur in Sao Paulo. People have often awoken robbed of their possessions and/or sexually assaulted after accepting open drinks.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters are not a significant problem in Brazil; however, flooding has plagued Sao Paulo state and many other parts of the country. Over the last several years, severe rainstorms have caused flooding in Sao Paulo with fatalities, homes destroyed, and bridges and highways closed. Congonhas Airport is particularly susceptible to heavy rainstorms.

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STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- It is common in Brazilian culture for men to display dominance over women in what is known as machismo behavior. It is common for men to publicly degrade women or engage in catcalling actions; female travelers should anticipate receiving such attentions.
- Elements of Brazilian culture have a class system, which specifically disadvantages those with darker skin color. Travelers that fit this profile may be treated with less respect than those of European descent while in the country.
- 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: 55

International Dialing Prefix: 0021

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

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POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is: 190

FIRE DEPARTMENT: 193

AMBULANCE: 192

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

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Roads in Sao Paulo are subject to flooding during rainstorms.
- Throughout Brazil, road conditions outside of the main cities vary greatly.
- Brazil uses automatic photo-ticketing systems to discourage speeding, and tickets are mailed to the owner of the vehicle.
- Crime on the road remains a problem for both visitors and local residents alike, especially during evening travel and in traffic jams.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No rural travel after dark.
- No deviation from approved travel routes.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No bathing or swimming in rivers.

HEALTH

The basic standard of health care in Brazil is generally good. Medical infrastructure in the main urban centers, including Brasilia, is generally of a higher standard than facilities in rural areas, where the quality of medical care varies greatly. Facilities in rural areas may offer only basic care, while certain types of medical equipment and medicines may be in short supply.

- Tap water in Brazil 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.
- 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.

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

- Hepatitis A (recommended)

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- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended)
- Typhoid (recommended)
- Yellow Fever (recommended)

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

SIGNIFICANT DISEASES –

- **Dengue Fever** – A life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted by the Aedes mosquito.
- **Malaria** – A life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes.
- **Schistosomiasis** – A parasitic disease spread to humans who bathe, swim and/or wade in contaminated water.
- **Yellow Fever** – A viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes.
- **Rabies** – A life-threatening virus carried in the saliva of infected animals and is typically transmitted through an animal bite. Most cases of rabies have been caused by bites from vampire bats and have generally been limited to remote areas in the northeastern and northern regions of Brazil.
- **Chagas' disease** – A parasitic disease transmitted through foods which have been contaminated by triatomid bugs.
- **Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome** – A life threatening infection acquired through exposure to the excrement of wild rodents. Cases of the disease are reported annually in large parts of the country, mainly between June and August.
- **Diarrhea** – A common illness among travelers in the country and can be caused by bacteria, virus or parasites. One of the most common causes is a bacterium known as E. coli, which is transmitted by ingesting contaminated food and liquids.

HOSPITALS –

Portuguese beneficence of Sao Paulo – Sao Jose Hospital

Martiniano de Carvalho, 965

Bela Vista

Sao Paulo 01321

Tel: +55 (0)11 3505 6000

<http://bpsp.org.br/Default.aspx>

Division of Rehabilitation Medicine

Street Diderot, 43

Vila Mariana

Sao Paulo 04116

Tel: +55 (0)11 5549 0111

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Fax: +55 (0)11 5549 0556

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

UNITED STATES EMBASSY

Setor de Embaixadas Sul

Avenida das Nacoes

Quadra 801, Lote 3

Brasilia

Tel: +55 (61) 3312 7000

Fax: +55 (61) 3225 9136

Email: ConsularBrasilia@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.