

A Parent's Guide to Study Abroad

**University of Rochester
Center for Education Abroad
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Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am writing to you because your son or daughter has expressed interest in studying abroad next semester. We have assisted thousands of University of Rochester students in internationalizing their undergraduate experience. Most of them say that it was a time of tremendous intellectual and personal growth; you may know this if you yourself studied abroad in college, or have another child who has already done so. The University of Rochester is committed to international education and to preparing students to take their place in the global political and economic community.

Your son or daughter will go through a number of steps in order to spend a semester or year earning credits towards their degree in another country. They will apply to two or more study abroad programs, meet with faculty and study abroad advisors, and consult with peer advisors who have already studied abroad. They are already enrolled in a non-credit, online course entitled "Study Abroad Orientation." This includes online resources as well as a mandatory in-person group meeting. The course covers topics such as health and safety, financial aid, budgeting, packing, transfer credit, and much more. Through good preparation, we help make their transition to living overseas as smooth as possible. As part of the orientation, students receive 5 pre-departure orientation handbooks covering various topics. You may read these at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/abroad/predeparture/index.html>. Or contact the Center for Education Abroad for printed copies.

While your son or daughter is away, it is important for us to be able to reach parents and families if necessary. We have asked your son or daughter to provide your contact information through our online UR Study Abroad Portal. By providing this information, your son or daughter is authorizing the UR Center for Education Abroad to contact you in the event of an emergency.

We hope that you find the information in this packet useful and interesting. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call us at (585) 275-7532. You may also email us at abroad@admin.rochester.edu

Sincerely,

Tynelle Stewart
Assistant Dean and Director

*Cover photo by Priscilla Alabi ('13, taken in Istanbul, Turkey)
Information contained in this booklet is current as of May, 2016, and is subject to change.*

“Won’t study abroad cost a lot more than spending a semester or a year at Rochester?”

The fact is, that for most students, a semester or a year abroad costs about the same as a semester at Rochester. If your son or daughter receives University of Rochester financial aid, it **will** transfer to a Rochester study abroad program. Advisers in the Financial Aid Office are there to help, and there are many special scholarships for which students may be eligible. Students are required to meet with their financial aid counselor before they study abroad. Students who participate in a UR-sponsored program are charged tuition and basic housing; students who participate in non-UR sponsored program will be charged an administrative fee of \$1,538.

“Will my daughter have to spend an extra semester at Rochester? Will the courses transfer?”

Education abroad advisers will only recommend programs where the courses *do* transfer, so students graduate on time. In most cases, students can even transfer courses for majors and minors by consulting with a department adviser. The Center for Education Abroad counselors guide students through this process.

“There’s so much going on at UR - how can he leave for a whole semester?”

There is a lot out there in London, Cairo, Tokyo, Madrid, Dublin, Shanghai, Vienna, or Beijing, too. Going away for a semester does not mean giving up all of the interests and activities they have at UR. For example, musicians seek out venues to play, and athletes find teams to join. Rochester will still be here when he gets back - and he will have new perspectives on UR, the United States, and himself when he returns.

“Can a science (or engineering) major study abroad?”

Request a copy of our “Study Abroad Opportunities for Science and Engineering Students” flyer for a list of programs. There are programs in 21 countries that offer science and/or engineering courses. Faculty advisers will be very encouraging. The Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Center for Education Abroad are working on developing new opportunities for engineers.

“My son doesn’t speak another language.”

Study abroad can change that. Or he may choose a program where courses are taught in English.

“My daughter has learning disabilities.”

All programs are open to students with disabilities. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) staff and study abroad advisers work with students to identify programs that best suits their interests, talents and academic needs. Information from CETL is provided in Part 4 of the pre-departure handbook:

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/abroad/predeparture/index.html>

“My daughter is planning Take 5/med school/ grad school /law school. Won’t a semester abroad get in her way?”

Students who have clearly defined interests such as graduate or professional schools can plan with counselors in the Center for Education Abroad, the College Center for Advising Services, and the Gwen M. Greene Career and Internship Center. Many students have studied abroad as part of a Take Five project.

“I’m concerned about what employers or graduate schools will think of study abroad.”

Students who study abroad *highlight* it on resumes. Employers and graduate schools – yes, even medical schools - look for independent people who can adjust to new situations. Alumni emphasize how interested interviewers are in their international background. The Gwen M. Greene Career and Internship Center also encourages these experiences. You will find University of Rochester students who went abroad for a semester or for a year in all fields: professors, physicians, scientists, lawyers, entrepreneurs, journalists, writers, teachers, gallery and museum administrators, human rights activists, filmmakers, and academic administration, to name a few!

“Where will my son live while abroad?”

There are many types of housing on study abroad programs. Some offer residence halls, but it is more common for students to live in apartments, either with other students from US colleges and universities, or with local students. Homestays may also be an option. Particularly in locations where students are eager to acquire new language skills, students may choose to live with families. Some programs offer only one type of housing, but others offer multiple options. It is important for students to understand the different choices before committing to a program, and that they are required to live in the program’s housing. Normally, they will be in double-occupancy rooms.

“While my daughter is overseas, who is responsible in case of emergency?”

Every study abroad program has a responsible local director, available on 24-hour call in case of emergencies. That person is fluent in the local language(s), and in many cases, is a citizen of the country. Either they, or their staff, will guide students in the event of medical or other problems. Program directors manage everything from cultural questions, mediating roommate problems, helping students adjust to local foods, registering for classes on the program, or guiding students in the event of a crisis. The Center for Education Abroad at the University of Rochester is always available for questions. Evenings and weekends, emergency issues can be addressed to UR Public Safety at 585-275-3333. UR Public Safety staff are then in contact with study abroad staff. University Health Service is available for emergency medical consultation 24 hours a day at (585) 275-2662.

“What if my son needs to leave the program?”

In the event that your child enrolls in a study abroad program and is unable to complete it, refunds, if any, will be based on the UR’s standard refund schedule, and on recoverable costs. The refund schedule is applied according to the calendar of the study abroad program. If students enroll in a non-UR program, no refund is possible for the UR study abroad fee, and they would communicate directly with the program sponsor about the possibility of any refund of the program fee.

“My daughter does not have a US passport. How will she remain in status while abroad?”

International students can study abroad as part of their UR academic program. In order to maintain their SEVIS record and eligibility for re-entry in valid F-1 or J-1 status, they must notify the International Services Office (ISO) in advance. A new immigration document will be issued to show that the study abroad is authorized. ISO will guide students and provide them with necessary information about maintaining valid immigration status.

“Does the University of Rochester Student Code of Conduct apply to my son while overseas?”

Yes. Your son or daughter is required to read and to understand the University of Rochester Code of Conduct, including the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy. A copy of this handbook can be found on-line at: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/dos/conduct/>. The same behavior expectations exist overseas, in matters relating to student-to-student relationships, class attendance, and academic honesty. Please be advised that if your son or daughter is placed on disciplinary or academic probation before their study abroad program begins, this may affect plans to study abroad.

Rochester-sponsored and Non-Rochester-sponsored Programs

Rochester students may choose from a wide variety of study abroad programs. A UR-affiliated program is one with which we have a formal agreement, and a complete current list appears on our web site.

There are also more than 2500 other programs offered by other institutions and universities (“non-UR-sponsored.”) Your son or daughter should meet with a study abroad counselor before choosing a program.

Advantages of a UR program

- Grades earned on a UR-sponsored program will be shown on the UR transcript, although for the most part, they will not be calculated into the grade point average (GPA). Grades earned on non-UR programs will not be shown on the UR transcript, nor will they be calculated into the GPA.
- UR programs brochures are available at the Center for Education Abroad, and the applications are coordinated by our office. Our office is the primary liaison between students and program sponsors.
- On a UR-sponsored program, **elective** transfer credit is automatic upon completion of approved coursework with a C or better. All students need to obtain appropriate faculty permission for overseas coursework to count towards a major, minor, or certificate program.
- Students who participate in University of Rochester-sponsored programs are eligible for additional special scholarships. Transfer credit is not granted for courses completed at UR or elsewhere.

Advantages of a non-UR program

- Although the minimum overall GPA for applying to UR-sponsored program is 2.8, many programs have more stringent requirements. Students may find that they have more flexibility with non-UR programs.
- For some students, particularly for those who do not receive any merit or need-based scholarships from UR, the overall cost of the program may be lower.
- No college or university can offer a program in every country. Allowing students to choose from the more than 4500 options available opens every possibility.

Students on non-UR programs need to obtain approval before going abroad for **all** coursework taken overseas, since some non-UR courses may not be accepted by UR for transfer credit. Advisers in the Center for Education Abroad assist students in determining transferability of overseas coursework. For example, it is essential that the adviser determine if the program is offered by an accredited institution.

Study Abroad Status

All UR students studying abroad who wish to receive academic credit for their work are placed on “study abroad status.” Study abroad status maintains the student as a full-time, matriculated, University of Rochester student.

All students studying on non-UR sponsored programs are assessed a \$1, 538 per semester administrative fee which is charged to the term bill (see “Billing” below). Students on study abroad status are eligible for continuation of UR health insurance while abroad and remain matriculated students. Study abroad students must notify the UR insurance office if they wish to do this: insurance@uhs.rochester.edu If not, notified coverage is canceled for the semester the student is away. Students may not use Inactive Status (used for a leave of absence from UR) and receive academic credit from a study abroad program.

Financing Study Abroad

Listed below are general guidelines regarding financial aid eligibility for students on study abroad programs. However, as each student's financial situation is unique, it is his or her responsibility to meet with a financial aid counselor while planning a semester(s) abroad. Financial aid can be defined as a combination of any of the following: merit scholarships from UR, need-based aid, and loans.

Students participating in UR-sponsored programs are charged UR tuition and housing. Students participating in non UR-sponsored programs are charged an administrative fee (\$1,538).

Financial Aid

For those participating in UR Programs: If your child is a financial aid recipient, they will be eligible to receive financial aid during their semester abroad. If the total program cost is less than the cost of studying at UR for that semester, their need-based aid will be reduced proportionately. Merit awards will not be reduced. Please have your child meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss his or her specific situation. Students receiving need based aid are required to meet with their financial aid counselor.

For those participating in Non-UR Programs: If your child chooses to study on a non-UR program, they will not be eligible to receive the same financial aid they are currently receiving. Most importantly, they will not be eligible for any University of Rochester financial assistance. It is especially important for your child to discuss their plans with their financial aid counselor to determine what types of aid they will be eligible for while abroad and to ensure the continuation of their aid when they return. A small number of study abroad programs have their own financial aid or scholarships available.

In order to be reviewed for federal aid eligibility, students participating in a non-UR study abroad program must complete a Consortium/Contractual Agreement. Detailed instructions on completing the Agreement are included. A Consortium/Contractual Agreement involves multiple steps and requires several signatures, so your child should not delay in completing this requirement. **Your child's coursework must be approved before the UR Dean can sign the Consortium Agreement.**

Scholarships

There are numerous scholarships and other resources available for study abroad. Application deadlines vary and some may be up to a year in advance of a study abroad program. Also, be sure your child checks with a financial aid counselor to discuss how these outside awards might affect their aid. In any case, it will be to your child's benefit to win a prestigious national award.

A list of all of these scholarship programs is available from the Center for Education Abroad.

Billing

If your child is participating in a study abroad program in the fall, the fall semester statement will be posted online in mid-July. If your child is participating in a study abroad program in the spring, the spring semester statement will be posted online in mid-December. Your child will not receive a statement in November unless they have a balance from the fall semester. Students participating in a full-year program will be billed on a semester basis. Please note that students studying abroad will be charged the campus post office box fee, unless the post office box is closed by turning in the key and providing a forwarding address.

The balance must be paid in full from the prior semester to register for a study abroad program. If there is a past due balance, students may settle their account with the Bursar's Office, 330 Meliora Hall, 275-3931. Your child's registration for a study abroad program is subject to cancellation if payment is not kept current and their past due balance is \$5,000 or greater, or if they submit a check that is returned by the bank, unless acceptable arrangements are promptly made

If your child is participating in a non-UR program, UR will bill them for the study abroad fee (\$1,482). This fee partially covers costs incurred by the University for administrative services and guarantees that credit will be awarded for approved courses successfully completed abroad. Your child will be billed directly for the program by the college or university that sponsors the program.

If your child is participating in a UR-sponsored program, UR will bill them for UR tuition and housing. If your child selects UR-sponsored student health insurance plan while abroad, the charges (mandatory health fee and insurance premium) will be placed on the student's account. Contact insurance@uhs.rochester.edu to assure enrollment.

For more information about refunds and other billing questions, we strongly encourage you to read the student pre-departure handbook, "Money Matters", available on our website at: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/abroad/predeparture/index.html>

Insurance

Medical Insurance: Check your health insurance coverage to find out if the student will be covered during the stay abroad, and whether any special conditions apply. If the student has been insured through the University of sponsored plan, this coverage can be extended overseas, but only by written request. UR Coverage is canceled during Study Abroad unless an extension is requested. Contact insurance@uhs.rochester.edu to request extension of enrollment.

If your child selects coverage by the UR-sponsored student health insurance plan while abroad, the charges (mandatory health fee and insurance premium) will be placed on the student's account. Be sure you and your child know how this system works: how bills are paid, what happens in the case of a medical emergency, and how to access routine treatments. If your student is on a program that begins later or ends earlier than the semester at UR, please ensure adequate coverage is in place through your insurance provider. For programs requiring their own insurance plan, coverage begins the day the program starts and ends the day the program ends.

Should students require medical attention abroad, it may be necessary for them to have sufficient cash on hand to make payment at the time of treatment since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to process medical bills through an American insurance company.

For students who study abroad during the academic year, UR provides them with a Worldwide Travel Assistance insurance policy that provides coverage for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. Students who participate in UR programs sponsored by IES, CIEE, DIS and AUC, or who are covered by the UR/Aetna insurance plan already receive this benefit. This benefit does *not* cover routine medical services.

Travel and Property Insurance: Student travelers should have insurance to cover any loss of money because of trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage and other property while traveling or living in overseas. In addition, we recommend that students consider purchasing personal liability insurance against injury or damage caused by or resulting from students' acts or omissions during enrollment in any program.

The University of Rochester is not liable for damage or loss of personal property. Contact your insurance agent regarding property insurance.

Safety Abroad

Safety is understandably foremost in the minds of students and of their families. Concern for student safety abroad has always been of primary importance to The College, and it remains an integral part of our standard procedures and practices. Most study abroad destinations are statistically less dangerous than the average American city. Our approach to promoting safety abroad is founded on communication, information, and cross-cultural sensitivity.

No university can guarantee the safety of its students overseas, any more than it can guarantee their safety on the home campus. The staff of the Center for Education Abroad has access to varied resources for information about the relative political and economic stability of host countries. We are in regular contact with our overseas partners who, in turn, work closely with American consulates and embassies. We monitor international conditions daily, with information from the U.S. Department of State, our overseas partners, and our colleagues here at the University of Rochester.

We require your son or daughter to enroll for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/step.html> STEP is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows students to enter information about their upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist them in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Students who are well-informed about the international context of their study abroad host country will be best equipped to ensure their own safety. To that end, we provide students and families with the latest announcements and travel advisories from the Department of State. Also, prior to departure, all prospective study abroad students attend a mandatory orientation seminar. This seminar serves as the first meeting of a required online course. Students meet peer advisers who present important information about safety, managing money, packing, transfer credit, health issues and much more. Through good preparation, we make the transition to living overseas as smooth as possible.

At the same time, students have responsibility for their own safety by monitoring developments on their own through public sources and by not intentionally putting themselves in harm's way.

It is important that University and program representatives are able to reach students' families quickly in case of emergency. Before students leave for the overseas program, we ask students provide us with up-to-date contact information through the UR Study Abroad Portal.

Pre-departure Orientation

The Center for Education Abroad organizes a Pre-Departure Orientation for students studying abroad in the coming semester. It is primarily online, and includes one required group meeting. All students receive a departure packet containing valuable information. We strongly encourage you to review the pre-departure booklets, available on our website:

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/abroad/predeparture/index.html>

Taking Care of Business While Still at UR

We often remind students to take care of *all business before they leave the UR campus*. It is much easier for students to contact professors and staff members, obtain necessary signatures, and sign important forms in person, rather than from a distance. Here is a brief checklist we provide to students in their Pre-departure packet:

- Find out about your banking options. Your program will most likely give you some information about banking in your host country.
- Meet with a counselor in the Financial Aid Office in Wallis Hall if you receive any financial aid (this includes need-based aid or merit awards, i.e. scholarships).
- Obtain course approvals for foreign language courses and for courses you wish to use towards your major, minor, or certificate. If you are going on a non-UR program, you will need to have all courses approved for transfer credit.
- Make several copies of your passport. Leave a copy at the Center for Education Abroad.
- Research the city and country where you will be studying.
- Forward your UR email account to a web-based email provider such as Yahoo or Gmail. All official correspondence will only be sent to your UR email account.
- Visit the River Campus post office to give a forwarding address and to maintain your CPU box.
- Obtain an insurance ID card from your insurance company.

How to Contact the Center for Education Abroad & Other UR Offices

Dewey 2-161
 Rochester, NY 14627-0376
 TEL: (585) 275-7532
 FAX: (585) 473-6494

abroad@admin.rochester.edu

<http://www.rochester.edu/abroad>

<p>University of Rochester Public Safety Maintenance & Transportation Building TEL (585) 275-3333 FAX (585) 273-1128 e-mail: 4info@security.rochester.edu</p>	<p>Residential Life Contact: Laurel Contomanolis TEL (585) 275-3166 FAX (585) 275-7941 e-mail: housing@reslife.rochester.edu</p>
<p>Bursar's Office TEL (585) 275-3931 FAX (585) 461-3356 e-mail: bursar@admin.rochester.edu</p>	<p>Registrar's Office Contact: Nancy Specht TEL (585) 275-8131 FAX (585) 275-2190 e-mail: registrar@mail.rochester.edu</p>
<p>Gwen M. Greene Career and Internship Center Law professions, career planning TEL (585) 275-2366 FAX (585) 461-3093 e-mail: careers@mail.rochester.edu</p>	<p>River Campus Parking Office Contact: Glenroy A. Sicard, Sr. TEL (585) 275-3983 FAX (585) 275-8097 e-mail: rcpark@services.rochester.edu</p>
<p>Financial Aid Office Contact: Any Financial Aid counselor TEL (585) 275-3226 FAX (585) 756-7664 e-mail: help@finaid.rochester.edu</p>	<p>International Services Office Contact: Cary Jensen TEL (585) 275-2866 FAX (585) 244-4503 e-mail: questions@iso.rochester.edu</p>
<p>University Health Services (UHS Health Insurance Coverage) \ Contact: Linda Dudman TEL (585) 273-5770 FAX (585) 276-0149 e-mail: ldudma@uhs.rochester.edu</p>	<p>Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development (MA, 3/2 Programs) TEL (585) 275-3950 FAX (585) 473-7598 e-mail: admissions@warner.rochester.edu</p>
<p>Simon School of Business (MBA, 3/2 Programs) Contact: Rebekah Lewin, Executive Director of M.B.A. Admissions and Administration TEL (585) 275-0492 FAX (585) 271-3907</p>	<p>College Center for Advising Services General academic issues: any Academic Advisor Certificate Programs: any Academic Advisor Graduate Fellowships: Belinda Redden Health Professions: Caterina Tempest Take Five: Juliet Sullivan TEL (585) 275-2354 FAX (585) 275-2190 e-mail: cascas@mail.rochester.edu</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Office of the Dean of Students Contact: Dawn L. Bruner, Director of Parent Relations TEL (585) 275-5415 FAX (585) 276-0151 e-mail: dawn.bruner@rochester.edu</p>	

Useful items and gift ideas for students going abroad

Here are some suggestions that can be purchased on-line, or in stores that cater to travelers' needs.

1. *TRAVEL GUIDE / MAP*
2. *"HEALTHY TRAVEL" GUIDE*
3. *PAPERBACK COOKBOOK*
4. *INEXPENSIVE WATCH*
2. *SMALL FLASHLIGHT*
3. *SAFETY WALLET*
4. *SMALL PHOTO ALBUM OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS*
9. *DECK OF CARDS OR HAND-HELD GAME*
11. *PHONE CARD*
12. *"SLEEP SACK"*
13. *CAMP TOWEL*

March 3, 2016

The Department of State is updating the Worldwide Caution with information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. Current information suggests that ISIL, al-Qa'ida, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and other terrorist groups continue to plan terrorist attacks in multiple regions. Recent terrorist attacks, whether by those affiliated with terrorist entities, copycats, or individual perpetrators, serve as a reminder that U.S. citizens need to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated July 29, 2015.

In August 2014, after the United States and regional partners commenced military action against ISIL, ISIL called on supporters to attack foreigners wherever they are. Authorities believe there is a continued likelihood of reprisal attacks against U.S., Western, and coalition partner interests throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and Asia.

U.S. citizens continue to be at risk of kidnappings and hostage events as ISIL, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates attempt to finance their operations through kidnapping-for-ransom operations. U.S. citizens have been kidnapped and murdered by members of terrorist and violent extremist groups. ISIL, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are particularly effective with kidnapping for ransom and are using ransom money to fund their activities.

Extremists may use conventional or non-conventional weapons and target both official and private interests. Examples of such targets include high-profile sporting events, residential areas, business offices, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, public areas, shopping malls, and other tourist destinations both in the United States and abroad where U.S. citizens gather in large numbers, including during holidays. In the past year, major extremist attacks occurred in countries including Tunisia, France, Nigeria, Turkey, Egypt, and Mali.

U.S. citizens are reminded of the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructure. Extremists have targeted and attempted attacks on subway and rail systems, aviation, and maritime services.

U.S. citizens considering maritime travel also should review information at the websites of the National Geospatial Agency, the Maritime Administration, and the U.S. Coast Guard for information related to maritime and port security globally. Current areas of concern include the Caribbean, Gulf of Guinea, Horn of Africa, and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore as a result of maritime crimes including smuggling, human trafficking, and piracy.

The information provided below offers select regional or country examples. Please check travel.state.gov for additional information.

EUROPE: Credible information indicates terrorist groups such as ISIL and al-Qa'ida and its affiliates continue to plot near-term attacks in Europe. All European countries remain vulnerable to attacks from transnational terrorist organizations.

European authorities continue to warn of the possibility of attacks conducted by lone individuals inspired by extremist organizations that could occur with little to no warning. Extremists have targeted large sporting events, theatres, open markets, aviation services, transportation systems, and public venues where people congregate. Authorities believe there is a high likelihood terror attacks in Europe will continue as European members of ISIL return from Syria and Iraq. European governments are taking action to guard against terrorist attacks; however, all European countries remain potentially vulnerable.

MIDDLE EAST and NORTH AFRICA: Credible information indicates terrorist groups also seek to continue attacks against U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa. The U.S. government remains highly concerned about possible attacks against U.S. citizens, facilities, businesses, and perceived U.S. and Western interests. Private U.S. citizens are strongly discouraged from traveling to any country to join in armed conflict. U.S. citizens are reminded that fighting on behalf of or providing other forms of support to designated terrorist organizations, including ISIL, can constitute the provision of material support for terrorism, which is a serious crime that can result in penalties including prison time and large fines.

In Syria, the security situation remains dangerous and unpredictable as a civil war between government and armed anti-government groups continues throughout the country. Groups such as ISIL, al-Nusra Front (ANF) and al-Qa'ida operate there. In recent years, Westerners have been kidnapped and several have been killed by terrorist groups in Syria.

U.S.-designated terrorist groups operating in Lebanon include Hizballah, ISIL, ANF, Hamas, and the Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB). U.S. citizens have been the target of terrorist attacks in Lebanon in the past, and the threat of anti-Western terrorist activity remains.

In Iraq, ISIL controls significant territory in northern, western, and central Iraq, and continues to attack Iraqi security forces and civilians in those areas.

In Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, groups affiliated with ISIL, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and other terrorist groups have conducted attacks against both foreign and local targets.

In Yemen, the security situation has deteriorated greatly since 2014, necessitating the suspension of operations of the U.S. Embassy in February 2015. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIL remain threats to U.S. citizens in Yemen.

AFRICA: Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitun remain active in northern Mali and Niger, and recently conducted major attacks in Mali and Burkina Faso in which U.S. citizens were killed. Terrorist groups have stepped up their rhetoric, calling for additional attacks or kidnapping attempts on Westerners and others, particularly those linked to support for international military intervention.

The terrorist group AQIM has declared its intention to attack Western targets in the Sahel (an area that stretches across the African continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea to include Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea). It has claimed responsibility for kidnappings, attempted kidnappings, and the murder of several Westerners throughout the region.

Al-Shabaab assassinations, suicide bombings, hostage taking, and indiscriminate attacks in civilian-populated areas are frequent in Somalia. Al-Shabaab retains its demonstrated capability to carry out attacks in government-controlled territory in Somalia and in neighboring countries such as Kenya and Djibouti.

Boko Haram, an extremist group based in northeast Nigeria, has claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks, mainly in northern Nigeria. Boko Haram also has targeted women and children for kidnapping, reportedly kidnapping women in northern states for marriage as “slave brides.” Boko Haram has carried out attacks in Cameroon’s Far North Region, western Chad, and southern Niger, targeting foreign expatriates, tourists, and government leaders.

SOUTH ASIA: The U.S. government assesses terrorist groups in South Asia may be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. facilities, citizens, and interests. The presence of al-Qa’ida, Taliban elements, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, indigenous sectarian groups, and other terrorist organizations, many of which are on the U.S. government’s list of designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, poses a potential danger to U.S. citizens in the region.

Although the Government of Pakistan maintains heightened security measures, particularly in the major cities, terrorist attacks have occurred against civilian, government, and foreign targets. Attacks have included armed assaults on heavily guarded sites, including Pakistani military installations and airports. Terrorists and criminal groups also have resorted to kidnapping for ransom.

No province in Afghanistan should be considered immune from violence and crime, and the strong possibility exists throughout the country for hostile acts, either targeted or random, against U.S. and other foreign nationals at any time. Taliban and other extremist organizations remain active in every province of the country and frequently target both Afghan government and foreign interests.

India continues to experience terrorist and insurgent activities which may affect U.S. citizens directly or indirectly. Anti-Western terrorist groups active in India include Islamist extremist groups such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Indian Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. Past attacks have targeted public places, including some frequented by Westerners, such as luxury and other hotels, trains, train stations, markets, cinemas, mosques, and restaurants in large urban areas.

Since September 2015, Bangladesh has experienced a series of increasingly sophisticated violent attacks. These include the murders of two foreign nationals, as well as bombs and other attacks against gatherings of religious groups and security forces. ISIL publicly claimed credit for many of these attacks. Additionally, groups claiming to represent al-Qa’ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) asserted responsibility for a series of threats and terrorist attacks targeting writers, publishers, and others in the media, including the murder of a U.S. citizen blogger.

CENTRAL ASIA: Supporters of terrorist groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, al-Qa’ida, and the Islamic Jihad Union remain active in Central Asia. These groups have expressed anti-U.S. sentiments and may attempt to target U.S. government interests.

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC: Information from credible sources suggests that there is a continued risk of armed terrorist and criminal groups operating and planning attacks against foreigners, including U.S.

citizens, in the East Asian and Pacific region. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Abu Sayyaf Group, have cells operating throughout Southeast Asia and JI is linked to al-Qa'ida and other regional terrorist groups.

There is a risk of travel to the southern Philippines, specifically related to kidnapping threats in the Sulu Archipelago and the ongoing threat of violence on the island of Mindanao, particularly in Central Mindanao. Foreigners in the Eastern Sabah province of Malaysia are also targets for kidnappings for ransom. Criminal or terrorist bands may attempt to intercept boats ferrying tourists in the area as well.

Indonesian counterterrorism efforts have prevented terrorists from conducting large-scale attacks in recent years. The January 14, 2016, attack in central Jakarta, however, shows that extremists in Indonesia still have the ability to carry out small-scale violent attacks.

U.S. government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.