

**CONSULAR NEWS
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

**U.S. Embassy Dakar, Senegal
August 2006**

New ACS Waiting Room

We are very pleased to announce that we now have a brand new waiting room for American citizens seeking services at the U.S. Embassy. The grand opening will be on Monday, August 14 at 9:00 a.m. As a result of the new waiting room, we have a service window specifically dedicated to Americans. Over the coming months, we plan to improve the waiting room and welcome any suggestions you have on how to make you wait at the U.S. Embassy more enjoyable and how to improve our services to American citizens. Please email your feedback to consulardakar@state.gov.

New Hours for American Citizens

Effective August 14, routine American citizen services will be available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. When you arrive at the embassy, please show your U.S. passport or proof of American citizenship to the guard and go directly to the Consular Receptionist window. You do not have to wait in line with visa applicants.

Emergency American citizen services are available during U.S. Embassy normal working hours, which are Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For an after-hours emergency involving an American citizen, please call 637-9566.

We are also available by e-mail at consulardakar@state.gov.

August's Frequently Asked Question

Q: I have questions about my friend or relative's visa case. How can the American Citizen Services Unit help me?

A: The American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit specializes in providing emergency and routine services to American citizens. The ACS staff is not familiar with the details of visas cases.

The most effective way to inquire about any visa case is to e-mail consulardakar@state.gov. We will direct your email to the appropriate visa unit to research the case and respond. To ensure a prompt and complete response, please include in your email the following information:

Immigrant Visa Cases: Case number beginning with DKR or FTN, name and date of birth of each beneficiary.

Nonimmigrant Visa Cases: Name and date of birth of the visa applicant as it appears on his/her passport.

For general information about immigrant or nonimmigrant visas, please visit our website at <http://usembassy.state.gov/dakar/>. Further information about visas is available on the Department of State website at http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website at <http://www.uscis.gov/>.

Avian Flu Update

The State Department recently updated its Fact Sheet on Avian Flu. This fact sheet alerts Americans to the Department of State's preparedness efforts with respect to a possible influenza pandemic. The Department of State emphasizes that, in the event of a pandemic, its ability to assist Americans traveling and residing abroad may be severely limited by restrictions on local and international movement imposed for public health reasons, either by foreign governments and/or the United States. Furthermore, American citizens should take note that the Department of State cannot provide Americans traveling or living abroad with medications or supplies even in the event of a pandemic.

Countries continue to report cases of avian influenza A (H5N1), commonly referred to as "bird flu" in their domestic and wild bird populations. In addition, countries are reporting H5N1 in other wild and domestic animal populations. A small number of confirmed cases of H5N1 among humans have been reported, some of which have resulted in death. More information is available on the World Health Organization (WHO) website, http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/country/en/. Please refer to this website for the most up to date information on the countries affected by H5N1 and the number of deaths.

The vast majority of the reported human cases have resulted from direct contact with H5N1-infected poultry. Although there is evidence to suggest very limited, human-to-human transmission in family groups involving close exposure to a critically ill member, there is no evidence that the virus can be easily or sustainably transmitted from human-to-human. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (DHHS/CDC), the WHO, and the Department of State are nonetheless concerned about the potential for the virus to adapt or mutate into a strain that can be easily transmitted in a sustained manner among humans, a characteristic that could result in a human influenza pandemic, and are working closely with other partners to prepare for the possibility of pandemic influenza. Information on the U.S. Government's overall response and efforts is available at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>.

The Department of State, the DHHS/CDC and the WHO have not issued any health precautions, travel alerts or warnings for H5N1 infected areas. However, the DHHS/CDC advises travelers to H5N1 affected countries to avoid poultry farms, contact with animals in live food markets, and any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with feces or fluids from poultry or other animals, and to eat only thoroughly cooked poultry products. American citizens traveling to or living in H5N1 affected countries should consider the potential risks and keep informed of the latest medical guidance and information in order to make appropriate plans. Specific DHHS/CDC travel information relating to H5N1, including preventive measures, is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm> and <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>. WHO guidance related to avian influenza is available at http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/.

Additional general country information can be obtained from the Department of State's Consular Information Sheets at <http://travel.state.gov> and embassy and consulate websites at <http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies1214.html>. You may also call the Department of State's toll-free number, 1-888-407-4747, or if calling from overseas, 202-501-4444.

A vaccine for humans that is effective in preventing infection with the avian influenza A (H5N1) virus is not yet available. Based upon limited data, the DHHS/CDC has suggested that the anti-viral medication Oseltamivir (brand name- Tamiflu) may be effective in treating avian influenza A. U.S. embassies and consulates do not have supplies of this drug for use by private American citizens abroad. The Department of State has pre-positioned supplies of the drug Tamiflu at its embassies and consulates worldwide, for eligible U.S. Government employees and their families serving abroad. Americans should also be aware of the potential health risk posed by counterfeit drugs, including those represented as Tamiflu, by scam artists who sell products on the internet or in countries with lax regulations governing the production and distribution of pharmaceuticals. For more information on counterfeit drugs please visit the Food and Drug Administrations (FDA) questions and answers for counterfeit drugs at <http://www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/counterfeit/qa.html>

In addition, the Department of State has asked its embassies and consulates to consider preparedness measures that take into consideration the fact that travel into or out of a country may not be possible, safe, or medically advisable during a pandemic. Guidance on how private citizens can prepare to shelter in place, including stocking food, water, and medical supplies, is available at the www.pandemicflu.gov website. Embassy stocks cannot be made available to private American citizens abroad and we encourage people living in an area with outbreaks of H5N1 to prepare appropriately.

It is also likely that governments will respond to a pandemic by imposing public health measures that restrict domestic and international movement, further limiting the U.S. government's ability to assist Americans in these countries. These measures can be implemented very quickly. Areas of known H5N1 outbreaks in poultry have been quarantined by governments within 24 hours, restricting (if not preventing) movement into and out of the affected area.

Americans who are planning travel to a country that has reported the virus or who are concerned about avian influenza are advised to monitor the DHHS/CDC and the WHO websites for the latest information.

Public Inquiries: English (888) 246-2675, Spanish (888) 246-2857, TTY (866) 874-2646
Mon-Fri 8am-11pm EST and Sat-Sun 10am-8pm EST

Address: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Rd., Atlanta, GA 30333

Traveler's Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

Crime Watch

On Sunday, July 30, someone burglarized the home of an American woman living near Yoff. No one was home during the burglary. A laptop computer, digital camera, video equipment, cash and other high value items were stolen.

On Sunday, July 23, 2006 at approximately 1:00 p.m., a Senegalese man attacked an American woman who was walking near the Indonesian Embassy in Fenetre-Mermoz. The man approached her from behind, pushed her and then grabbed her. The American screamed for help, but the man covered her mouth and dragged her to the bush. When two men on motorbikes approached, the attacker hit the American on the head and ran away. A man in a car stopped to help the American and a nearby security officer walked her to the Elton gas station. While they were walking down to the gas station, the American saw her attacker and pointed him out to the security officer. The American believes that the man may be mentally ill and is known to the security officer.

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Have You Left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau?

If you have left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau, please e-mail us at consulardakar@state.gov so we can remove your name from the warden registration database. If you would like to remain on the newsletter mailing list, please let us know in your e-mail.