

**CONSULAR NEWS
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

**U.S. Embassy Dakar, Senegal
January 2007**

American Town Hall Meeting

Ambassador Jacobs will host a town hall meeting on Thursday, January 25 at 5:00 p.m. All American citizens and parents of minor American children are encouraged to attend. This meeting will focus on upcoming Senegal's planned elections in February 2007 and planning for the possibility of an avian influenza pandemic.

Avian Influenza Update - How to Prepare for "Sheltering-In-Place"

Health professionals are concerned that the continued spread of a highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) virus among animals in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe has the potential to significantly threaten human health. If a virus such as H5N1 mutates and spreads easily from one person to another, avian influenza may break out globally. While there are no reports of *sustained* human-to-human transmission of avian influenza, the U.S. government and international health agencies are preparing for a possible pandemic.

Depending on the severity of a pandemic, commercial airlines might drastically curtail or even cease operations. Travel restrictions could also impede people from returning to the United States or fleeing to other countries. For these reasons, it may make more sense to "shelter-in-place" (i.e., stay home and practice "social distancing" to avoid contagion) for an appropriate period of time.

United States Residents: The Department of Health and Human Services suggests that U.S. residents prepare two weeks of emergency supplies (food, water, medicines, etc.) in order to shelter-in-place during an influenza pandemic.

American Citizens Abroad: Due to varying conditions overseas, Americans abroad should evaluate their situation and prepare emergency supplies accordingly (non-perishable food, potable water, medicines, etc.) for the possibility of sheltering-in-place for at least two and up to twelve weeks. Water purification techniques such as boiling, filtering and/or adding chlorine to locally available rainwater, swimming pools, lakes, rivers and wells may replace the need to store large quantities of water.

What can you do on a daily basis? Cover your cough. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to eradicate viruses and bacteria or apply a hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol content when soap and water are not available. Stay home if you are sick. Vaccinate yourself against seasonal flu.

Travel: American citizens living in or traveling to countries with human or animal cases of H5N1 virus should consider the potential risks. Keep informed of the latest medical guidance and practical information and plan accordingly. Consult www.travel.state.gov for the latest tips on international travel.

Online Resources: Detailed information about suggested preparations, as well as planning checklists, are available on the U.S. government's one-stop web site on pandemic influenza (www.pandemicflu.gov), also the World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/) and the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) websites.

Paris-Dakar Rally

The Paris-Dakar Rally is scheduled to end in Dakar on or about 21 January, 2007. Please be aware that this event draws many participants and tourists to Dakar, and crowds will form around the finish line and associated events. For more information on the rally, please visit:

<http://goafrica.about.com/od/adventuretravel/a/dakarrally.htm>

January's Frequently Asked Question

Q: I have heard that you will start issuing Emergency Photo Digitized Passports (EPDPs) for emergency cases. How is this passport different from the new E-passport that also seems to be in the pipeline?

A: The U.S. Embassy in Dakar can now issue Emergency Photo Digitized Passports in emergency cases. These passports are limited in validity and cannot be extended. You will need to exchange the limited-validity passport for a full-validity passport upon completion of your emergency travel, through passport facilities in the U.S. or U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad.

The EPDP is a twelve-page emergency U.S. passport intended to replace the machine-readable and other passports that Foreign Service posts currently issue around the world to Americans who cannot wait to receive a full-validity, domestically-issued passport. The EPDP is not an E-passport and has no circuitry in it, although the page designs are based on those used in the new E-passport. The digital image of the bearer, biodata, and machine-readable zone are printed on a foil inserted into a blank book and laminated making it more secure. For more information on EPDP, visit

<http://www.usembassy.org.ec/CONSULAR/U.S%20Emergency%20PPT%20Eng.pdf>

Crime Watch

On the afternoon of December 24, in the Fenetre Mermoz area, an American citizen man was robbed at knife point. He was walking on the road leading to the beach when a man wielding a knife grabbed his shirt and began "patting him down" for valuables. The victim was relieved of his cell phone and camera, but was left unharmed. Please remember to be especially cautious while walking in this area. Also, walking with items such as cameras and cell phones in plain view is especially risky.

On December 29, around 7:30 PM, in Les Almadies, an American woman's purse was snatched while she was waiting for friends to pick her up for dinner. The thieves stopped their scooter near the waiting woman, and the passenger approached as if he wanted to ask something. Once the man was close enough to her, he grabbed her purse and escaped on the idling scooter. The victim was not harmed.

Hours for American Citizen Services

Routine American citizen services are 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.

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.