

**CONSULAR NEWS
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

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

Town Hall Meeting

Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs cordially invites all American citizens in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to attend a town hall meeting on Thursday, June 15 at 4:30 p.m. at her residence. In addition to remarks by Ambassador Jacobs, the event will also include short presentations by the embassy's security, medical, and consular staff. Please bring a copy of your U.S. passport with you as identification.

Avian Influenza Update

The following is guidance from the State Department on controlling risks of avian influenza from bird droppings, bird carcasses, and house cats:

Birds infected with AI excrete the virus in their droppings, where the virus can survive for long periods, especially when temperatures are near or below freezing. Although there is minimal risk of humans becoming infected by AI from bird droppings (the majority of human cases have resulted from extensive contact with live poultry), as a precautionary measure the following guidelines should be followed when removing bird droppings, even in regions where there has been no documented case of AI. Bird droppings can contain infectious agents other than AI, and so these guidelines represent good practice in any case. (Note: These guidelines apply to the removal of thin coatings of droppings. Thick amounts of droppings -- i.e., those that would require removal using a shovel -- should be removed only by trained individuals.

Wear gloves that are either disposable or easily cleanable (for example, light-weight vinyl or nitrile gloves, or heavy duty dishwashing rubber gloves). Gently spray the droppings with water or preferably a disinfecting solution made from 3 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water. Allow time for the bird droppings to soften. Surgical masks should be worn if removal will aerosolize the droppings; i.e., cause the droppings to turn to airborne dust. Remove the droppings with a disposable or cleanable utensil. If dust is observed as the droppings are disturbed, stop and wet the droppings again before continuing the clean up. Place the droppings, tainted debris, and tools into a plastic bag and seal the bag. Clean re-usable utensils with water and detergent or preferably a disinfectant solution as described above. Clean the exterior of footwear with detergent and water or the disinfectant solution. Rinse reusable gloves with detergent and water or disinfectant solution prior to removing. Disposable contaminated gloves should be placed in a sealed bag for appropriate trash disposal. Place reusable gloves in a clean plastic bag and wash them in water containing detergent or disinfectant. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for 15-20 seconds.

Individuals with the greatest potential for occupational exposure to bird droppings are likely those performing building and security equipment maintenance (e.g., cleaning the roof,

mechanical penthouses, ledges where birds roost or rest, or CCTV equipment and lighting) or landscaping (e.g., pruning, digging, spreading mulch).

The AI virus remains in the tissues of infected dead birds for some time. Therefore, contact with dead birds should be avoided and local veterinary or agricultural authorities should be notified to collect the bird carcass for disposal or testing. If contact with a bird carcass is unavoidable (for example, a cat brings a dead bird into the house), wear gloves and, if possible, remove the carcass with a shovel or other disposable or cleanable utensil. Under no circumstances should the bird be touched with bare hands. Place the carcass in a plastic bag and seal it. Place this bag in another bag or a cardboard box. If disposing of the carcass in the absence of other instructions, bury it in a location where it is unlikely to be disturbed by other animals. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for 15-20 seconds.

A few domestic cats, in addition to pigs, tigers, leopards, ferrets, and stone martens (a weasel-like mammal), have been infected with AI. The cats are believed to have been infected by eating uncooked diseased birds. Although no human cases of AI have been associated with contact with AI-infected cats, the following measures are recommended if there has been a verified AI infection in birds within the region: Keep domestic cats inside the house to avoid exposure to potentially infected birds. Avoid all contact with stray cats and keep them outside the house. Inform local veterinary authorities if your cat is sick and has possibly been in contact with birds. Strictly follow normal cat care hygiene rules. When cleaning cat litter boxes, wear gloves and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately afterward.

For further information consult the following websites:

http://www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/avian_faq.asp

http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/avian_cats.html,

http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/wildlife_health_bulletins/WHB_05_03.jsp

http://www.oie.int/eng/en_index.htm

English Language TV and Radio Programs

RTS/TV has an English Language Magazine (ELM) on Sundays from 17:40 - 20:00.

June's Frequently Asked Question

Q: My friend wants to learn English. Does the American Embassy provide English classes?

A: While the U.S. Embassy does not provide English classes, the British Senegalese Institute has excellent courses. Their email address is british@sentoo.sn, tel: 822-2870. They are located at Rue du 18 June across the street from the Lycee Lamine Gueye.

Voting Update

Register to vote! 2006 is a general election year, and you can register to vote now. Many states allow the transmission of election materials electronically either by facsimile (fax) or electronic mail (email). Your state may allow you to send the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) for registration and/or absentee ballot request by fax or email, to receive a blank absentee ballot by fax or email, or even to return the voted absentee ballot by fax or email.

To check on your state, see the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website at www.fvap.gov under Miscellaneous Information (on the left), Voting Assistance Tools, **Chart of State and Territory Policies Concerning Electronic Transmission of Election Materials**.

You may also contact the consular section for information about voting.

Crime Watch

No crimes against private American citizens were reported to the Embassy in May.

Consular Hours

Routine American citizen services are available Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please come to window number two.

Emergency American citizen services are available during U.S. Embassy normal working hours. 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 indicate this in your e-mail.