

**CONSULAR NEWS
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

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

June Frequently Asked Question

Q. I was surprised to learn that my Senegalese friend was denied a visa. Why is it so difficult to get a visa? Can't I, as an American citizen, vouch for him and ensure he will come back to Senegal?

A. We can appreciate the frustration over the difficulties some individuals experience in trying to get a visa. We also understand the wish of U.S. citizens to have friends and family members visit the United States and we take seriously the assurances they offer in behalf of visa applicants. It is the applicant alone who must establish eligibility for a visa. Refusals should never be construed as reflecting negatively on the personal worthiness of the applicant or of his or her relatives in the United States. The issue is whether the applicant is qualified for a visa under the law.

U.S. law presumes that all applicants for a non-immigrant visa intend to immigrate to the United States. They overcome this presumption by demonstrating sufficient economic, professional, social and family ties to Senegal that would compel their departure from the United States after a temporary visit. This can only be done during an interview with a consular officer. If an applicant cannot demonstrate those ties to the satisfaction of the officer, the visa request must be denied. Under United States law, we cannot reconsider a visa refusal based on a request by an interested family member, friend, business contact, or even an embassy employee (including the Ambassador); instead, a previously denied applicant has to submit a new application. Every applicant must qualify individually. Others cannot vouch for their return.

Applicants are welcome to reapply for a non-immigrant visa at any time, by following our established application procedures. When they do apply, they will have to show further evidence of their ties or how their circumstances have changed since the time of their original application. Please be aware that they must pay a non-refundable application fee each time they apply for a visa, regardless of whether a visa is issued. Unfortunately, they may not qualify for a non-immigrant visa, regardless of how many times they reapply, until their personal, professional, and financial circumstances have changed.

For additional information, please see: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials_1361.html

New Embassy Website

The Consular Section is proud to announce a brand new website for Americans in Senegal and Guinea Bissau. We hope that this new website (part of a brand new Embassy website) will provide more useful information and links to American citizens. Please visit the website at

<http://dakar.usembassy.gov/service.html> and email your feedback and suggested improvements to consulardakar@state.gov.

Crime Watch

An American in Diourbel had her house broken into and her vehicle stolen between 19:30 and 20:30 on April 18th. The thief scaled the wall and entered her courtyard and pried open her front door with a metal bar, breaking the door lock and the dead bolt lock. He stole a camera, two laptops and a few other things, and found the car keys to her SUV. The thief was able to break open the doors to their courtyard and drove away with the goods and the vehicle. The American made an announcement concerning the theft in French and Wolof which aired on several radio stations. On Saturday, April 28, a police inspector on his nightly rounds in Dakar spotted the vehicle, and on Wednesday, May 2, the vehicle, along with three men, was seized in Pikine. Parts of the vehicle had been stripped off and sold, and none of the other stolen items were recovered.

An American citizen lost her wallet when she left it in a taxi when she was dropped off in Point E on Saturday, April 27. The wallet contained her driver's license, 2 debit cards, copies of her passport cover page and carte d'identite, and a small amount of cash.

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 383-9566.

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.