



# THREATS TO BUSINESS TRAVELLERS

AKE SPECIAL REPORT: AUGUST 2017

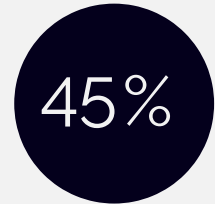
## OVERVIEW

### The world is an increasingly unpredictable place

Whether you are travelling overseas for business or pleasure, there will be factors that will have the potential to impact on your personal safety. Increased political unrest, the evolving threat from global terrorism and the constant presence of criminality continue to highlight, now more than ever, the importance of personal travel safety.

The types of threats and levels of risk vary from country to country. Travellers accustomed to low risk environments are less likely to be aware of the general security issues of higher risk destinations. Some may be unaware of the need to employ personal security and awareness techniques that can effectively mitigate risks.

This AKE Special Report highlights some of the key risks facing business travellers operating in Cairo (Egypt), Karachi (Pakistan), Kiev (Ukraine), Manila (Philippines), Mexico City (Mexico) and the Niger Delta (Nigeria). It also provides some mitigation advice, useful for business travellers ahead of and during their trip.



According to reports on world travel trends, up to 45% of international travellers have serious safety and security concerns

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## ABOUT US

For over 25 years AKE has supported individuals and organisations operating in challenging, remote and hostile environments worldwide, including deployments to Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria and Syria. AKE has developed a comprehensive portfolio of training courses that encompasses a wide spectrum of risk management issues. AKE also provides 24/7 crisis response and in-country support services. Together with bespoke reports prepared by regional experts from AKE's Intelligence department, individuals and organisations are provided with tailored risk analysis and mitigation strategies.

# CAIRO, EGYPT

Security in Egypt has steadily deteriorated since the July 2013 coup against former president Muhammad Morsi, which eventually installed Commander-in-Chief of the Army Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi as president. The insurgency run by the Islamic State (IS)-affiliate Wilayat Sina (WS) has gathered pace in the last year, forcing hundreds of Coptic Christians to flee and reducing the state's control to effectively the southern half of the Sinai Peninsula. WS has attacked Coptic churches during important festivals, highlighting the state's poor record of protection. Security incidents in Cairo remain less frequent, although no less vicious against the security forces. Police checkpoints on the major ring roads are the most frequent focus of armed groups that operate in the city, as well as targeted assassinations of security personnel. The kidnap risk for foreign business travellers remains low to moderate. Sufficient security precautions are advised. Travel at night on Cairo's main ring road is discouraged. Central areas of the city associated with protests should be avoided.

# KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Karachi is amongst the most dangerous megacities in the world. Despite operations by the Sindh Rangers that have helped reduce violent crime in the city, the risk to those travelling to Karachi for business remains elevated. Even in upmarket areas like Clifton and Jamshed Town the risk of street crime and credit card fraud remains high. As Pakistan's commercial capital, the city is regularly afflicted by mass protests and violence. There are demonstrations against government policy, due to inaction over the lack of policing in the city, and in response to sectarian violence. There is the risk that conflicts between factions of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and with other political movements could lead to violent demonstrations, particularly in the run-up to elections. There are also occasional anti-American protests, and US business travellers could be targeted. Road traffic accidents are common, given poor driving and road standards. In the event of an accident, motorists and locals could become violent.

# KIEV, UKRAINE

There remains a moderate security risk in Kiev (Kyiv) given elevated crime levels and semi-regular civil unrest. Hotels, leading restaurants and other attractions remain centred around Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) and Khreschatyk Boulevard, both of which are symbolic sights for some demonstrators as well. The area is adjacent to the government centre, where protests are frequent. Central Kiev has witnessed a growing number of incidents of petty theft targeting foreign nationals, with pickpocketing and mugging the primary concerns. The risk also remains high in non-central areas of the city. Business travellers are advised always to travel by pre-arranged taxis and not to arrange rides on the street, although this is common practice for locals. Travellers should also remain broadly aware of regional and local developments, which risk setting off mass demonstrations, particularly around the Maidan and Mykhaila Hrushevskoho Street.

# MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Foreign business visitors to Manila will face many of the same challenges as faced in visits to other southeast Asian cities, so long as they remain in central business areas such as Recto. However, there is a higher risk of violent crime in areas such as Malate, Ermita and Tondo, which should be avoided. Armed robberies do occur and it is recommended that expensive jewelry is not worn while transiting. While there are occasional terrorist attacks in Manila, they are no more frequent than in Western capitals such as London. Manila's traffic congestion regularly ranks among the most severe in the world. Plenty of time should be given for getting to meetings and rush hour should be avoided. Particularly bad is the ESDA road, which runs through Metro Manila. Business travellers should avoid unsafe means of transport such as scooters and pedicabs and are advised to book taxis (or have their hotel book a cab) in advance.

# MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

Mexico City poses several risks to business travellers, mostly stemming from petty and opportunistic crime. Express kidnapping is a growing concern. Mexico's capital is nevertheless unlikely to observe the levels of drug-related violence seen elsewhere in Mexico. When compared to the other locations, Mexico City appears to be relatively safe. However, crime rates have been on the rise and the risk of exposure to violent crime cannot be overlooked. Highway blockades are frequent and tend to affect travel itineraries. Pickpocketing, bag-snatching and assault on taxi passengers are common. Violent crime is usually confined to low-income areas in the city's east, which business travellers are unlikely to visit. However, sporadic incidents of violence can occur in central and upmarket areas. Organised crime is notorious in the Tepito neighbourhood. Mexico City's central area is particularly dangerous at night. Crowded squares and public transport are also affected by widespread crime. Theft is also common at the Benito Juárez International Airport and business class hotels.

# NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

The oil-rich Niger Delta hosts a number of multinational corporations, including Shell, Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Elf and Agip and is amongst the most volatile in Nigeria. Despite accounting for a significant proportion of GDP, the majority of the population live in poverty, fuelling resentment toward the government and oil majors. As a result of environmental degradation and food insecurity, communities have taken to protests (which can turn violent at short notice) and pipeline vandalism to demonstrate their grievances. 2016 saw oil output halved as a result of pipeline attacks throughout the region as militant groups proliferated in number. While a ceasefire implemented earlier in 2017 has held, it remains fragile. Nevertheless, militant-group activity has posed little threat to business travellers. Instead, businesspeople remain at high risk of kidnap for ransom, including piracy in the Niger Delta's creeks and waters. The incidence of crime, including armed robbery, is high.

# GENERAL ADVICE

- 1:** Prior to travelling, undertake detailed research of the destination, including any specific areas to be visited.
- 2:** Where possible, identify the key threats representing the highest medical and security risks. Consider how vulnerable you are to the threats. Adopt and maintain appropriate security measures and contingencies.
- 3:** Check the visa requirements for the destination.
- 4:** Use a reputable travel agency to book flights, vehicles and accommodation. Otherwise, seek recommendations for airlines, hotels and vehicle rental companies from a trusted source.
- 5:** Where possible, keep itineraries confidential. However, make sure that somebody within your organisation or family has a copy, including contact information. Make sure any updates are shared immediately.
- 6:** Make hard and electronic copies of travel documents. Keep the originals separate and secure.
- 7:** Have in place appropriate travel insurance with adequate emergency medical coverage.
- 8:** Visit a travel health clinic prior to travel. Check that any medication prescribed or otherwise is not prohibited and that you have adequate supplies for the trip, including additional contingency supplies.
- 8:** Where possible, wear casual clothing and avoid overt signs of wealth.
- 9:** Arrange to be met upon arrival. Agree a discreet means of identification. If using taxis, only use official ones.
- 10:** During check-in at your hotel only disclose absolutely necessary information. Where possible, avoid identifying your occupation, company name, position and details of any future meetings.
- 11:** Familiarise yourself with the hotel and surrounding area.
- 12:** Tune into your new environment. Be alert to anything out of the ordinary. Always be extra vigilant when arriving or leaving venues.
- 13:** Avoid predictable routines. Vary timings, routes and regularly visited or unavoidable locations.

## How can AKE help?

**Training:** Travel Safety Course (TSC) designed to assist individuals and teams, and to enable organisations to achieve duty of care and meet corporate compliance requirements for international travel.

**Risk evaluation:** Pre-deployment risk assessment providing tailored advice by country experts on the key country and task-specific risks.

**Field support:** 24/7 crisis response, tracking and protective security services.

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