



University
of Manitoba



University of Manitoba

66 Chancellors Circle

Winnipeg, MB

Canada

R3T 2N2

Precautions for Medium and High-Risk Travel

June 2022



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What is Medium and High-Risk Travel?

Please see the matrix below to determine the risk level of your destination(s). Government of Canada advisory levels can be found on the [Global Affairs Canada site](#). International SOS Risk Levels can be found on the [International SOS site](#) (login with the UM member number: **27AYCA524935**).

International SOS Risk Level	Extreme	High Level 3	High Level 3	High Level 3	High Level 3
	High	Medium Level 2	Medium Level 2	Medium Level 2	High Level 3
	Medium	Low Level 1	Medium Level 2	Medium Level 2	High Level 3
	Low	Low Level 1	Low Level 1	Medium Level 2	High Level 3
	Insignificant	Low Level 1	Low Level 1	Medium Level 2	High Level 3
		Normal	High Degree	Avoid Non-essential	Avoid All

Government of Canada Advisory

Can I travel to Medium and High-Risk Locations for UM purposes?

Yes. There are some additional considerations. Please familiarize yourself with the [UM Travel Tools website](#), to determine what your responsibilities are as a staff traveller, a staff member responsible for student travel, or as a student traveller.

Introduction

The following guide is meant to provide travellers with extra guidance for medium and high-risk destinations and is not a policy, nor a guide for UM travel in general. This guide provides some basic advice to reduce the risks you might face during your trip.

The advice in this guide is generic: for some destinations, the guidance will not be enough to address the complexity of the risks you might face, and you will need additional advice; for others, particularly places you are familiar with, the advice might seem unnecessary, or even extreme.

Some basic principles apply wherever you are going. These are:

- **Prepare.** Make sure you know what you will be doing, and take what you need – including medicines, identification documents, personal protective equipment (PPE), communications devices, and power supplies.
- **Be aware.** Understand your destination: wherever you are going, you must understand the nature of the risks, and the appropriate advice to mitigate their impacts. Be vigilant when you're travelling and ensure you can adapt to changes.
- **Don't stand out.** When possible, keep a low profile: criminals or terrorists are more likely to target the rich or the unwary, rather than those who give the impression of being familiar with their surroundings. If you don't stand out from the crowd, it will be harder for criminals to identify you. Even if you do – sometimes it is hard to avoid standing out – if you look as though you know what you are doing, they will probably move on to someone else.
- **Vary your routine.** Predictable routines create vulnerabilities: if potential assailants know your habits, they can plan accordingly. Individuals who vary their day-to-day routines are less likely to be targeted.
- **Stay in touch.** Keep a fully charged communications device with you. As well as checking in with your contacts, it's essential if you ever need to request assistance. Program your emergency numbers as contacts in your mobile device - and keep a hard copy just in case.
- **Have 'layers of protection'.** No single measure can guarantee your security. Sensible precautions involve layers of protection, including procedural as well as physical measures.

You should **consult International SOS country and city-specific information** to ensure you understand the general risks in each location. This can be accessed through the [International SOS website](#) (login with the UM member number: 27AYCA524935), mobile app, or by calling International SOS toll-free or collect.

If you are planning a trip to a more complex environment, or if you have additional vulnerabilities, we advise you to call one of the International SOS assistance centres to speak to a travel security specialist for **profile and itinerary-specific advice**, well ahead of your travel.

How to use International SOS Security Advice

International SOS provides advice in three forms, which complement each other and should be read in conjunction:

- **Standard travel security precautions**, which should be adopted for *all trips*
- **Standing Travel Advice** for each *destination*
- **Incident or location-specific advice** given in relation to recent *incidents* or identified upcoming *events*.

Standing Travel Advice

This advice addresses the *long-term* security issues relevant to travel in any given country and is linked to the country homepages. This advice is intended primarily to help people planning trips to identify the essential pre-trip preparation. The advice contains:

- A 'headline' statement of our current advice on any restrictions on travel to the country
- Advice on which of the **standard travel security precautions** are relevant to mitigate the main travel security risks that most travellers could encounter, such as crime, road safety or natural disasters
- Any **enhanced security precautions** necessary to mitigate specific travel risks
- Practical advice on completion of a 'standard' business trip, dealing with any essential pre-travel steps, arrival, selection of accommodation, internal travel and onward travel.

For complex environments, standing travel advice will highlight a recommendation on the need for a pre-travel discussion of itinerary-specific risks.

Incident-specific travel security advice

This advice is an integral part of our travel security reporting. It will usually be focused on a breaking incident or upcoming event and is intended primarily for *travellers in the immediate impact zone and those who might arrive in the area* in the near future. It consists of:

- Immediate advice to help travellers respond to the situation or event, including specific local details.
- Relevant precautions from the standing travel advice.
- Any **additional security precautions** that we recommend as a result of the incident.

Some alerts will contain more *in-depth analysis* of the incident and *background* information and will highlight *longer-term implications* that might affect upcoming trips. Where appropriate, these comprehensive reports will also contain:

- Advice for *travellers not yet in country* but with trips planned in the coming days.
- *Guidance for travel risk managers* on how they might support their travellers in an ongoing situation.

Tips and Advice

Basic Travel Tips – what you should do every time you travel

- Do not stand out: dress inconspicuously and avoid displaying jewelry or valuables such as laptop computers, mobile devices, or cameras.
- Do not carry large sums of cash.
- Familiarize yourself with your destination - the layout of the city and important routes – and be vigilant.
- Always carry a charged phone programmed with useful numbers - your hotel, local colleagues, police, or embassy - and the International SOS Assistance app.
- When out and about, keep a safe distance from large, unpredictable crowds – demonstrations or political rallies - and avoid commotions on the street.
- Do not give out personal information and don't discuss your plans with strangers.
- Memorize useful local phrases (please, thank you, yes, no, how much, stop here, etc.).

- Do not drink to excess: it is likely to reduce your level of awareness and judgment.
- Do not accept food or drinks from strangers: keep your food and drink in sight when socializing.
- Carry cash in more than one pocket and keep a small amount in a top pocket to hand over to a criminal who confronts you. A dummy wallet – with a small amount of local currency, an expired credit card and some useless receipts – can be useful to satisfy a mugger.
- If walking in public, carry small denominations of currency and keep the bulk of cash and cards in a money belt, which should only be accessed in private places.
- If you suspect that you are being followed, enter any busy public place, and call for help.

Information Security Tips

In addition to the [Travel Security Tips from IST](#), please observe the following:

Before travelling

- Research the potential cyber threats specific to your destination.
- Implement adequate and effective security measures to prevent issues during travel.
- Avoid advertising online the exact location/purpose of your business trip.
- Ensure all software on your devices is up to date.

During travel

- Avoid connecting to non-secure networks (public Wi-Fi hotspots).
- Maintain continuous physical control of your devices and sensitive information.
- Keep your laptop with you as carry-on luggage and do not lend it to anyone while travelling
- Do not connect your devices to sensitive networks until they have been verified as safe.

After travel

- When returning from a business trip or if you have witnessed suspicious activity on your devices, ask IST service desk to check for signs of cyber-attack.

Tips For Using Sharing Economy Services

- This includes ride-shares such as Uber, and accommodation such as Air B&B or VRBO.
- Confirm the services are legal at your destination.
- Use 'for business' versions of the services.
- **Safe use of sharing economy services varies significantly according to your profile and destination:** if in doubt, or for profile-specific advice, contact an Assistance Centre.

The Travel Journey

Pre-travel Preparation and Planning

- Before you travel, research local conditions and risks, and identify events that may cause disruption, such as national holidays, elections or planned strikes and demonstrations. Relevant information can be obtained by visiting our country pages, signing up for our email alerts and/or calling an Assistance Centre prior to travel.
- Ensure that you are aware of any important local customs, and political or religious issues.
- Ensure you turn on your roaming function (especially if your work has recently changed to a new provider).

What to take

- Passport and visa. Check that the passport is valid for the period of visit. Check visa dates and whether you need a multi-entry visa. Photocopy your visa and appropriate pages of your passport and keep these with you at all times in a different place from the originals. Additionally, scan relevant pages and send to an email account that you can access while abroad. Take spare passport photographs with you.
- If appropriate, your national and international driving licenses and copies.
- Credit cards. Consider reducing the limit to what you need for an emergency.
- Local currency (if it is legal to do so), and 'hard' currency (usually US dollars), including small denominations. Traveller's cheques and a record of the serial numbers.
- A dictionary/phrasebook if you cannot communicate in the local language.
- A city map and route map.
- Consider bringing a small torch (flashlight).
- Do not carry items that could cause offence at your destination (such as alcohol or magazines that may be viewed as 'pornographic').
- A bag or backpack to carry your items.

Check-in

- Before you leave for the airport, confirm that flight times have not changed.
- Dress casually; do not attract attention to yourself.
- Examine your ticket to ensure that your baggage receipt bears your correct destination, particularly if making connecting flights. Check that additional coupons have not been removed.
- During security screening procedures, keep your laptop in view.
- Move to the departure lounge as soon as possible.

Luggage

- Travel light if possible and do not take unnecessary valuables. Travelling with hand baggage may only be advisable if arriving at airports with lengthy waits for baggage and poor security.
- Once packed, always keep your bag in sight. Serviceable but inconspicuous luggage and briefcase is less likely to attract attention.
- Pack important or confidential documents, glasses or contact lenses, prescription drugs (in the original packaging with a copy of the prescription) and a change of clothes in hand luggage.
- Label luggage with a personal email address only so the airline can contact you, but without giving away unnecessary personal information.

Flights

- Only drink alcohol in moderation.
- Avoid detailed discussions with strangers, and do not reveal information about yourself, your company or journey.
- Do not photograph the airport, even from the aircraft.

Arrival

- Find out about airport formalities and immigration procedures before you arrive, most international airports have good websites with this information.
- Stay alert. You may be tired but be aware of your surroundings.
- Be polite and stay calm when dealing with police and immigration officials, who can be officious and heavy-handed.
- If necessary, change some money inside the airport: enough for a taxi if your transport does not arrive. Do not display cash in public areas.
- On a first visit, try to arrange to be met and ensure that you will be able to recognize the person sent to meet you. Ensure that you have a contact number for your hotel or host. Alternatively, use a hotel courtesy bus.
- If using a taxi, find out from local contacts which are the safest and most reliable, and how much you should expect to be charged. Use an official booth or queue.
- If there is no meter, agree a price beforehand.
- Do not allow airport employees to walk away with your baggage. Supervise the loading of luggage into buses or taxis – do not leave it to the driver. Keep important items with you.
- Do not leave the airport with anyone whose identity is in doubt. If in doubt, ask an airport official.
- Display an air of confidence.

Accommodation

- Choose a hotel close to your working location. See advice from local hosts or colleagues.
- Be vigilant when registering, especially if the lobby is crowded. Keep all luggage in view and check in using your work address.
- Ensure that your hotel room numbers remain confidential. Do not display the room's key tag in public areas, and stress that the room number should not be given to any inquirers.
- Insist that the hotel room has a lock-chain, deadlock and spy-hole, and that the door and window locks work properly.
- Use the safe in your room for valuables.
- Avoid rooms with interlocking doors. If unavoidable, make sure they are locked – and consider using a door wedge as an extra precaution.
- Do not accept a ground- or first floor room; or rooms with access from a side balcony or a fire escape.
- Take a room no higher than the sixth floor and as far as possible from the main entrance and principal public areas.
- Make sure you know the location of fire exit routes and know what to do if an alarm is activated.
- Keep the door to your room locked and use the chain/spy hole when receiving a visitor. Do not open the door, especially late at night, until you have confirmed the visitor's identity. Be wary, even of callers who claim to be hotel employees (phone to check with reception).
- Meet strangers in the lobby, not in your room.
- When leaving your room, display the 'do not disturb' sign. Leave the light on (so that you can easily check that the room is secure on returning). Ask reception for a spare room key if you need one to keep the electricity on – though in most cases any credit card-sized item can be used.

- Before retiring, secure valuables and confidential documents, preferably in a 'grab bag' which you can take with you in case of emergency.
- Retrieve your passport before checking out.

In locations where terrorism is a significant threat, the following considerations should be noted:

- Hotels that offer low-rise accommodation – for example, a series of single-story buildings set in grounds – are less attractive targets for bomb attacks because the reduced room density decreases the likelihood of inflicting heavy casualties.
- The hotel should be located away from main roads and at least 1,600 feet (500m) from prestigious government or key diplomatic buildings.
- A room away from the main entrance, principal public area or parking area would be likely to reduce the impact of a bomb attack.

Accommodation with the following features will usually have a better standard of security:

- Well-controlled access to the main entrance, with obstacles intended to slow traffic and restrict large vehicle movements.
- The overt presence of uniformed guards.
- CCTV in the lobby and grounds.
- No provision for parking beneath the hotel and well-controlled access to service areas.

Onward Travel and Getting Around

Taxis and minicabs

- Use only licensed/regulated companies.
- Ask local contacts/hotel staff about any different tariff levels (for different times of day).
- Ask your contacts or hotel to recommend a reliable minicab company. On ordering, ask for the vehicle registration number and the driver's name. Do not get into a minicab that you have not ordered.
- In unmetered taxis, agree the fare before starting the journey. Hotel staff or local contacts will be able to advise on appropriate fares.
- If you are unable to communicate with the driver, ask someone to give him instructions or write down the address. If possible, ask a local colleague write down important addresses in the local language, and carry them at all times.
- Sit in the rear of the taxi. Always wear a seat belt. Do not discuss personal details with the driver.
- If you feel uneasy with the driving or the route (or the driver), instruct the driver to stop at the first secure or busy place.
- Do not display large amounts of cash when paying.

Rental cars

- Use a trustworthy local driver, especially if you are new to a country. The driver should know areas to avoid and be able to carry out basic maintenance.
- If possible, select an older, more basic vehicle to avoid attracting attention. Thieves may favour particular models; local contacts should know which ones.
- Choose a vehicle with robust locks and central locking, a lockable fuel cap, a front seat passenger rear-view mirror, and vehicle alarm.
- Make sure your vehicle is appropriate for the local conditions.
- Use a reliable company offering 24-hour emergency service and ensure that you have the contact details for the service.

- Ensure that you have an inflated spare tire that you know how to change, a maker's toolkit; and appropriate insurance, and that any security equipment is functioning.

Driving

- Keep all doors locked and windows closed, particularly when stationary.
- Keep items of value, such as briefcases or cell phones, out of sight. Ideally place them by your feet: do not leave on an empty seat.
- Keep a good distance away from the vehicle in front (at least half a car's length when in traffic, more at speed) to give room for maneuver in the event of trouble.
- Be alert to ploys such as cars that lightly bump you, bogus accidents, or roadblocks. Drive on and notify the police when it is safe to stop.
- Avoid driving alone, especially at night.
- Be especially vigilant at vulnerable points, such as road junctions and traffic lights, especially if you see suspicious persons loitering in the area.
- Ignore beggars or street vendors who approach you or your vehicle.

Parking

- Park in an area monitored by security personnel and illuminated at night.
- If secure garaging is not available, park in an area that is overlooked, well-lit and that offers no hiding place for an attacker.
- If your car is parked in an insecure place, and has been unsupervised, approach with caution and walk past if suspicious persons are nearby. Approach the vehicle with your keys to hand.
- Set the alarm system whenever the vehicle is parked.

Driving and the law

- Carry your driving license, vehicle registration papers and insurance certificate.
- Be familiar with traffic laws and traffic accident procedures.
- Do not drink and drive.
- If involved in a serious accident, keep calm but be aware that onlookers are likely to side with the local person. In some places, angry crowds can gather quickly: it may be advisable to continue to the nearest police station to report the accident.
- When dealing with the police, do not sign any documents until you know what they say, even if this means waiting for a translator. If police are unwilling to find a translator, insist politely, but firmly. Inform your embassy.
- Police in some countries may demand cash as a fine for a 'traffic violation', which may or may not have occurred. Insisting on a receipt might deter casual requests for bribes.

On foot

- Ask your host or hotel if it's OK to walk around – during daylight or after dark.
- Ask the concierge about reliable transport and areas to avoid. Obtain a local map and mark these areas, the location your hotel and embassy/consulate. Carry the map and a list of important telephone numbers, especially at night.
- Carry only what you need for the day: keep valuables, such as wallet or purse, in an inside pocket. Separate items of value. It is useful to have a small amount of money – or even a wallet with expired cards – in an accessible pocket that can be handed over to a mugger.
- Avoid walking in deserted areas or along dark streets, especially when on your own or in unfamiliar areas.

- If it is essential to walk in or through a trouble-spot, do not go alone. If you have any concerns, leave the area immediately.
- Never accept a lift from a stranger.
- Be wary of strangers who offer to accompany you in an unfamiliar area.

Responding to an Incident

- Never head towards an incident or disturbance. Immediately depart the scene by a direct route in the opposite direction of any threat.
- Find a safe location, such as a major international hotel, a diplomatic mission, hospital, or a secure business premise. Move only if necessary, to gain a more secure location.
- Immediately attempt to communicate out. SMS texts have a longer latency and stand a better chance of reaching any recipient in an affected area. However mobile (cellular) communications networks might be unworkable, either as the volume of traffic increases, or as emergency responders reserve the network for their own purposes. Landline services are an alternative.
- In the immediate aftermath, make reasonable attempts to account for other members of your party. If you are in a group, stay together.
- If necessary, medical assistance should be sought immediately. Any injured people should be accompanied to hospital and you should find out where any injured people will be taken. If you can, seek advice on any private medical facilities.
- Once at a place of safety, continue to communicate. Even when telephone lines are down, email and broadband links sometimes stay in operation. If communications have failed altogether, take whatever steps you can to get a message to the nearest diplomatic mission.
- Do not leave the secure location without notifying someone of your plans. Attempt to identify other foreigners similarly affected, stay together and pool resources. In general, avoid the temptation to relocate, certainly without ensuring that the route is clear and informing someone outside of your plans.

Explosions or likely terrorist attacks

- Find solid cover and get behind it.
- Look for an escape route.
- Move in short bursts, from cover to cover.
- Find a safe location and communicate.
- Watch out for secondary attacks.

Violent protests

- Identify the source of the disturbance.
- Look for an escape route.
- If you are indoors and have no good escape option, lock and barricade the doors and stay away from the windows. Communicate your situation by phone. Remain in location until the threat has passed.
- If you are outdoors, be wary of protesters and the security forces, adopt a non-threatening posture and follow all official directives. Avoid taking videos or photos of the protest. Do not enter cordoned off areas.
- If tear gas is being fired in your vicinity:
 - Leave the area impacted and seek high ground.
 - Avoid running as it may increase your intake of air and gas. If your eyes are burning or blurry, rinse them with water, ideally for at least ten minutes. Avoid touching your face.
 - Do not try to touch or move tear gas canisters.

Armed robbery

- Stay calm and follow orders, even if it means handing over your wallet or handbag. Do not offer more than what they ask for.
- Activate alarm devices as soon as possible, but only if it is safe to do so.
- Do not make sudden moves. Tell the attacker(s) what you are doing at all times.
- Do not resist, fight, or challenge the attacker(s).

Additional Tips for Women, non-binary, and female-presenting travellers

- Observe and respect local clothing customs. You may wish to reach out to your hosting organization ahead of time to ask about norms and expectations. Norms may vary according to rural and urban settings, as well as in offices, labs, and in the field.
- Confirm the suitability of transport options at your destination and prioritize security in your choice of transport.
- In some communities, a lone female traveller is a source of curiosity; you may be stared at if travelling alone. As a precaution, avoid eye contact with strangers, especially on the street and on public transport. Avoid wearing headphones, talking on the phone, or texting when commuting or on foot to prevent appearing distracted and vulnerable.
- A wedding ring – even a fake one – can reduce levels of unwanted attention.
- Decline politely but firmly any invitations which make you feel uncomfortable, even if faced by amicable pressure to accept.
- Ignore suggestive comments. If the situation escalates, do not be afraid to draw attention to yourself; typically, bystanders and locals will come to your aid.
- A door wedge and/or portable alarm are useful items for extra security in some destinations.
- Always use the dead-bolt while in your accommodations.
- Request a room near the lift lobby and on the third floor or above, or on a women-only floor if one is available. Ask your hotel reception to write down your room number for you instead of saying it out loud.
- If travelling alone, restrict evening entertainment to business-class hotels or membership clubs. Check with local hosts or hotel staff about local area safety.
- Check additional precautions advised for women, nonbinary, and female-presenting travellers; call for advice if you have any concerns about the specific risks you might face in a specific destination.

Additional advice for 2SLGBTQ+ Travellers

Homosexuality is illegal in many countries. Additionally, social attitudes in some countries can result in harassment of two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (2SLGBTQ+) individuals, even if same-sex relationships are legal. Sometimes, risks can be heightened on a temporary basis because of local social or political developments. Transgender travellers also risk facing delays or difficulties at border controls and immigration points if they present as a different gender than the one stated in their passport.

The following steps can be taken to minimize the likelihood of encountering adverse social, legal, or physical consequences arising from your sexual orientation:

- **Be aware of local laws and attitudes related to sexuality:** Where the legal framework restricts the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, they should either ensure they understand and can comply with local laws, or reconsider travel. Travellers should also be aware of countries where, while 2SLGBTQ+ identities are not illegal, other laws such as anti-blasphemy laws and morality laws may be used against 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

- **Be prepared:** Transgender travellers should have an itinerary review and check if they will be entering strictly gendered spaces at any point in time, such as religious sites.
- **Keep a low profile:** In higher risk locations, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals should be aware that public displays of affection or expressing opinions on 2SLGBTQ+ issues in public may expose them to increased risk. If 2SLGBTQ+ travellers receive unusual attention or are victims of abuse in a public place, they should leave the area and go to the nearest business premises or any other secure building (e.g., university campus, shop, office building, hotel).
- **Be vigilant:** 2SLGBTQ+ individuals should exercise higher levels of vigilance in areas or circumstances with a higher likelihood of criminal activity (e.g., isolated location, poorly lit street), which may increase their vulnerability to hate crimes. They should remain alert to their surroundings, check for signs of being followed and be wary of over-friendly strangers. The latter can in some instances turn out to be individuals with violent homophobic intentions, or actors in an entrapment campaign by police in countries where homosexuality is illegal.
- **Protect your privacy:** 2SLGBTQ+ travellers should consider temporarily removing from mobile devices any applications, images or other content which could inadvertently expose them to greater scrutiny from the authorities. This is especially important for countries where homosexuality is illegal (*see below*), and where scrutiny of electronic devices is common on arrival.
- **Facilitate security and identity control:** Transgender individuals are advised to secure a passport that matches their name and gender prior to travelling to avoid any difficulties at border control. Transgender individuals should be flexible if their gender is misidentified, especially in countries that have a poor understanding of gender identities. Transgender travellers who are bringing medication with them should have a doctor's note in advance to explain the presence of their medication or syringes in their luggage. If transgender travellers are wearing prosthetics or padding, they should remove these before going through security detectors or risk being subjected to further body checks.
- **Seeking help:** 2SLGBTQ+ travellers should be clear about the support networks that they will be able to contact should any incidents occur. This includes knowing how to reach their embassy, the details of their local office and local hosts or friends that they can rely on should they be harassed or assaulted. Going to the police, especially in a country that is not 2SLGBTQ+ friendly, may not be the best course of action after facing harassment or abuse. Local authorities may be reluctant to provide assistance to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals that have been targeted or assaulted due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Disclosing a 2SLGBTQ+ identity can also expose individuals who report a crime to the authorities to prosecution or other consequences in locations where the legal framework restricts their rights.
- **Call International SOS:** Concerned 2SLGBTQ+ individuals should call their nearest Assistance Centre for a detailed assessment of location-specific risks and related advice.

The regional overviews below are meant as a broad guidance on the legal status of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

Please note that in some countries, same-sex relationships are illegal, but related laws are not enforced. In others, they are legal, but social attitudes are conservative and can elicit discrimination against and harassment of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. A minority of countries attach strict penalties (up to life imprisonment or death sentence) to homosexuality, though they are rarely enforced.

Finally, countries may not have explicit laws against same-sex relations but other legal provisions, such as 'public indecency' acts, which can be used to harass, arrest and prosecute 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, sometimes just for discussing related topics.

It is therefore advised to precisely ascertain the status of your destination location, where legislation and/or social attitudes may evolve, prior to any trip. [ILGA](#) is an excellent source. The information below is based on 2022.

Africa

Homosexuality is illegal in most African countries. This is the case in particular in Mauritania, Nigeria (in states under Sharia law) and Somalia, where punishment can include the death penalty. This is rarely enforced, except in parts of Somalia controlled by the extremist al-Shabab group, where Sharia is strictly applied. However, harassment of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals is common.

Homosexuality is also illegal, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals may experience harassment or even imprisonment, in the following countries: Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In the countries where homosexuality is legal, such as Mozambique and South Africa, people may still encounter verbal harassment or physical attacks.

Americas

Homosexuality is legal in most countries of the region, though violent verbal or physical attacks on 2SLGBTQ+ individuals occur in some Central and South American nations. Public displays of affection, especially in rural areas, may attract attention and raise the profile of the traveller, leading to an increase in security risks.

In 2020, 82% of killings of transgender individuals globally took place in Central and South America, including more than half in Brazil, according to the [Transrespect vs Transphobia Worldwide](#) research project.

Homosexuality is illegal in several Caribbean nations: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent & the Grenadines. Nevertheless, incidents of violence and even harassment by local residents and the authorities do occur in other countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico and Venezuela.

Asia

Homosexuality is illegal in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Kiribati, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tonga and parts of Indonesia.

In Afghanistan, homosexuality is punishable by death. In Brunei, Malaysia, and the Maldives, a 2SLGBTQ+ individual could face Sharia law punishments such as whipping, imprisonment or death by stoning. More commonly, punishment involves fines and imprisonment. In Pakistan, while homosexuality is illegal and punishable by imprisonment, this is not uniformly implemented.

In Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kiribati, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Tonga, homosexuality is punishable by fines and extended imprisonment.

Laws against homosexuality are only sporadically enforced in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kiribati, Myanmar, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Tonga. However, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are vulnerable to police harassment.

While consensual same-sex relationships are legal in India, societal acceptance is variable. Furthermore, the 2SLGBTQ+ community does not have legal safeguards under parameters linked to marriage, joint ownership or any other such constitutional protection.

While same-sex relationships are legal in most parts of Indonesia, there are strong cultural and social norms that mean that 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, including foreign nationals, may be charged with public indecency, anti-prostitution and anti-blasphemy laws, even if explicit anti-homosexuality laws are not in place. In addition, there are local ordinances in place in South Sumatra province that classify homosexual acts as immoral behaviour, which may result in fines or jail terms.

Central Asia

Male homosexuality is illegal in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, where the sentence can be up to two- or three-years' imprisonment, respectively. Both countries disallow discussing 2SLGBTQ+ issues in the media.

Some other countries in the region, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have no legislation outlawing homosexual relationships. However, the 2SLGBTQ+ community remains largely invisible and more vulnerable to discrimination due to prevalent conservative social norms.

Europe

Homosexuality is legal in most European countries. Homosexuality is legal in Russia, but there are laws against its expression, including fines for people giving information about homosexuality to minors.

In the Balkans, there were several instances of attacks during events organized by the 2SLGBTQ+ community, such as annual Pride marches. Violent verbal or physical attacks on 2SLGBTQ+ individuals occur in the region, and it is best to avoid public displays of affection as a precaution.

In recent years, countries such as Croatia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia have all taken steps to attempt to restrict marriage to a union between a man and a woman only or have adopted laws that prohibit marriage equality. This trend can often be attributed to an increased influence of conservative or far-right political parties, and in some places their rise to power, which is a key factor to watch globally as a likely precursor to reduced 2SLGBTQ+ rights and, potentially, more open expression of anti-2SLGBTQ+ rhetoric.

According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA)'s 2021 report, hate speech against transgender people is increasing among European politicians. An increasingly open expression of anti-2SLGBTQ+ rhetoric in politics can influence social attitudes, including by creating a favorable climate for harassment and abuse.

Middle East

Homosexuality is illegal in most countries. Some – such as Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen – impose strict penalties for offences, including fines, prison sentences, deportation and/or death. 2SLGBTQ+ members in these countries face a credible risk of public discrimination, harassment and, in a worst case-scenario, assault based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

In Iran, those convicted of same-sex intercourse can face the death penalty, while other homosexual acts of affection are punishable by public flogging.

Same-sex relationships are legal in Israel and sit in a grey legal space in Egypt and Jordan. In Egypt, the authorities have been known to arrest homosexuals and charge them with debauchery, blasphemy, or immorality. Harassment can occur in all those countries.

While homosexuality is legal in Turkey, hate speech against the 2SLGBTQ+ community has become more prevalent among politicians as well as increasing on social media, according to ILGA.

Mitigating Natural Hazards

Pre-travel

- Before travel, confirm the natural hazard risks in your destination, sign up to receive International SOS email alerts, and register with your embassy.
- If visiting an area prone to a specific natural hazard, ensure you know what to do in the event of an emergency – and consider practicing emergency procedures.
- On arrival, prepare a grab bag to take with you should a move at short notice be required. The bag should be light enough carry easily and contain the following:
 - Torch/flashlight with spare batteries
 - First aid kit, including essential prescription medicines
 - Bottled water and dry snack foods
 - Spare car keys, a road map, and directions to reach your alternative accommodation
 - A small amount of cash (small denomination bills)
 - Photocopies of essential documents in a watertight container or bag (including passport, visa, driver's license, identity/social security card, list of important phone numbers; insurance policies, proof of residence etc.)
- Other useful items for longer-duration trips include a battery-operated or wind-up radio, a pocketknife or multi-tool, a whistle and lightweight, high-energy food.

While travelling

- Monitor the local news to stay informed about watches, warnings, and associated restrictions.
- On longer-duration trips, ensure you are familiar with your community's disaster warning system and know the location of, and how to reach, any designated emergency shelters.

Travel risk managers

- Ensure that corporate crisis management and business continuity plans – including evacuation plans – are in place and disseminated to all relevant personnel. Plans should be reviewed for relevance and tested regularly with all staff members to ensure awareness and preparedness.
- Ensure members of the corporate crisis management team are identified and a team notification procedure is in place and tested regularly. Responsibilities and information flows within the team should be clearly defined. Communication plans should be in place allowing management to account for large numbers of staff. Management should also consider how time-critical security information can be disseminated to travelling personnel.
- Companies should consider the extent of their obligations in the event of an evacuation to their dependents and local employees.
- Managers should establish the feasibility of emergency medical evacuation from all areas of operation and ensure that medical and travel insurance is kept up to date for all personnel.

- Employees travelling to or based in areas at risk from natural hazards should be briefed on what to do in the event of an emergency and understand the support available and its limitations. For people in some locations, formal training might be necessary, including first aid, and the use of emergency equipment.
- Local Managers should assist longer-term visitors or expatriates with physical preparation of offices and accommodation, including providing supplies, life-saving equipment, flood defenses (e.g., sandbags), and alternative power sources, and reinforcing accommodation in areas prone to tropical storms and hurricanes.
- In-country offices should be fully aware of the local or national disaster management plans and ensure they have full contact details of the response agencies.
- Companies should ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for all premises and assets.

Responding to an Incident or Natural Disaster

During an Earthquake

- If **indoors**, drop under a sturdy table and protect your eyes with your arms. If there is no sturdy table, drop next to an interior wall and cover your head with your arms. Avoid external walls and areas close to windows and large mirrors, where glass could shatter. Leave your place of shelter only when the shaking has stopped. Avoid using elevators.
- If **outdoors**, drop to the ground, curl into a ball, and cover your eyes with your arms. Where possible, lie in a place away from buildings, large trees, overpasses, bridges, and telephone/electrical lines. Do not attempt to re-enter buildings after an earthquake until it is declared safe to do so. If you are in a mountainous area, watch out for falling rocks and landslides.
- If you are in a car, slow down and stop in a clear area that is not overhung by buildings, trees, or telephone/power lines. Avoid stopping on bridges or in tunnels. Remain inside the vehicle until the shaking has stopped.
- If you find yourself trapped underneath debris, tap on a pipe or a wall or use a whistle to help rescuers locate you.
- Following an earthquake, aftershocks are possible, which can be strong enough to further damage already weakened structures. Tsunamis may also occur in coastal areas – see below for advice. If near the coast, move to higher ground after the shaking has stopped.

During Flooding

- Flash flooding can occur with little or no notice. In the event of a flash flood, do not wait for instructions to move.
- Avoid floodwater, which may be contaminated by leaked chemicals or raw sewage. Water mains normally considered safe may now be contaminated. There is also a risk of water being electrically charged from damaged power lines.
- Avoid moving through flooded areas if possible. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. Exercise caution if movement is necessary, even where water appears shallow. Walk only where water is not moving, using a stick to feel the ground in front of you.
- Vehicles can be swept away by moving water. If you find yourself inside a vehicle with floodwater rising around it, exit the vehicle and move to higher ground.

During a Hurricane

- The safest place to be is an underground shelter, basement, or safe room. If no underground shelter or safe room is available, a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building is the safest alternative.
- If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, away from windows.

- If caught outside, immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If flying debris is present, pull over and park. Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible. If possible, to get lower than the level of the roadway, exit the vehicle and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.
- The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds.

During a Tsunami

- The warning time for a tsunami is very short. React immediately and move to high ground. Where possible, choose the upper floors of a building made of reinforced concrete rather than brick. Stay away from windows.
- If high ground does not exist, run, or drive inland away from the coast.
- Monitor the tsunami's progress and listen for warnings or instructions from local officials. These instructions may come via emergency SMS notifications and/or local radio.

Travel risk managers

- Account for all travellers and expatriate staff. Confirm their status; ensure they are in a safe location and that they have adequate supplies. Identify communications methods and alternative contact points in case of power outages.
- Assist in liaising with authorities and external agencies should there be a requirement for assistance.

In the Aftermath of an Incident

- Monitor the radio for developments and guidance from the authorities.
- Inspect your building for damage. Wear long trousers, a long-sleeved top and, if possible, sturdy shoes when examining walls, doors, staircases, and windows. Immediately put out any fires and monitor the building for smoke for several hours.
- Gas leaks are possible due to damaged infrastructure; do not use candles, matches or lighters. Turn off the building's gas supply. Do not operate light switches if you suspect there has been a gas leak. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window, and get everyone out of the building quickly; call the gas company or local fire service.
- Watch out for and avoid fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately.
- Check for injuries. If you are trained, provide first aid to persons in need until emergency responders arrive.
- Clean up spilled medications, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids that could become a fire hazard.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls. Ensure that any mobile telephones are kept charged where there is power. Where there are multiple telephones, use only one at a time, keeping the others charged at all times where possible.
- During a black out, turn off any electrical equipment that was in use when the power went out. If you use a generator, connect equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Never connect a generator to a building's electrical supply.
- Roads may be blocked or subject to closure by the authorities with little or no notice. Ensure that your vehicle is appropriate for the terrain and always carry adequate communications systems, full spares, supplies, first-aid equipment, and enough fuel to complete your return journey.
- Be alert to dangers posed by structural damage to buildings and bridges.

- Carefully consider the need to journey to affected areas. Personnel should liaise closely with local sources prior to making a decision to travel and balance the need against the impact of any natural hazard event.
- Travel in affected areas should only be undertaken with careful a risk assessment and forward planning, which should cater for a likely shortage of power, basic supplies (including food, water, and fuel), accommodation and transportation as well as communication difficulties. Travellers should aim to be self-sufficient and should ensure that they have back-up communications systems in place should landline/mobile/internet networks fail. Access to medical services may be limited or non-existent. Full medical kits should be taken with personnel who are trained in their use.
- Security force sensitivities may be heightened; treat members of the security forces with patience and respect. The authorities may cordon off areas or block access routes during any rescue or recovery operations. This should be factored into route planning.
- The security environment following a natural hazard event will become more complex with a possible increased risk of looting, robbery, and burglary. Movement through severely affected areas should be done within a suitable security framework.
- Airports may be closed due to damage and civilian flights may be cancelled to allow military or aid flights to land. Reconfirm flight bookings and liaise closely with your airline.

Travel risk managers

- Account for all local employees, travellers and expatriate staff to determine the scale of exposure and the nature of any assistance. Do not rely on support from local emergency services as these may be overstretched.
- Activate the crisis management team if necessary and review evacuation and business continuity planning; ensure that all those within the crisis team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities with corresponding actions. Consider whether evacuation of staff from affected areas is necessary – any evacuation should only be undertaken with careful security planning.
- Given the evolving nature of such incidents, managers should ensure they can make timely decisions and that their internal procedures are effectively integrated with supporting providers. Plans should incorporate access to relevant, reliable, actionable information and the ability to communicate with supporting organizations.
- If evacuation is unnecessary, managers should consider withdrawing non-essential staff until operational difficulties have eased, including a temporary relocation to a safer part of the country, or to a neighboring country if possible.
- Ensure that unoccupied offices, facilities, and corporate accommodation are secured. As soon as possible, arrange an audit of structural damage and carry out safety checks to gas, water and power supplies.
- Ensure your travel policy reflects any need for temporary restrictions on travel to affected areas. If travel goes ahead, ensure your staff receive pre-travel briefings on potential medical, security and logistical difficulties. Staff should also be briefed on the support available and its limitations.
- Maintain continuous communication with affected staff and internal stakeholders within the organization.

Preparation of Offices or Accommodation

- In earthquake-prone areas, eliminate potential hazards in accommodation/offices; bolt/strap bookcases, water tanks (use straps for tanks), cupboards, shutters, heavy mirrors, and pictures etc. to walls. Make sure cupboards have strong latches. Ensure electricity panels and wires, heaters, boilers, and furnaces are secured.

- In areas at risk of flooding, preparations should include sealing walls in basements, elevating your boiler and any electric heaters, and installing check valves in sewer traps. Consider acquiring sandbags and pumps and stock up on bottled water.
- In areas prone to hurricanes, secure your house. Permanent storm shutters will protect doors and windows. These can be purchased or built from plywood. Identify a safe room, ideally a small room without windows in the center of your house. Remove diseased and damaged limbs from trees. Move or secure lawn furniture, waste bins, hanging plants and other loose items. Watch for hurricane danger signs, including dark, often greenish clouds, wall cloud, debris, heavy hail, or a roaring noise.
- In areas where wildfires can occur, familiarize yourself with evacuation routes and safe assembly areas. The local fire service or forestry office should be able to provide localized information.
- Identify potential alternative accommodation if evacuation is necessary. Choose several alternative locations; these may include friends' or relatives' homes in other towns, public shelters, or hotels. Program the contact telephone numbers of these places into your mobile telephone. Ensure you know how to reach your pre-identified accommodation and be ready to take alternative routes if major roads are closed or congested.
- If resident in a high-risk zone, identify a relative with whom you and your dependents can 'check-in' and confirm well-being if you are not together when a natural disaster occurs. Where applicable, ensure you are familiar with your company's check-in procedure.
- All forward planning should cater for the possibility of shortages of power, accommodation, and transportation as well as communications difficulties.

Additional Supports

For additional supports, please visit the [UM Travel Tools](#) website. Please report errors or dead links to Breanne.Guiboche@umanitoba.ca.