











Malaysia - Moderate



Malaysia Country Map

-  POLITICAL
-  ARMED CONFLICT
-  TERRORISM
-  CRIME
-  CIVIL UNREST
-  MARITIME AND PIRACY
-  HEALTH
-  ENVIRONMENTAL
-  TRANSPORTATION

Last Published: 09 June 2026

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Malaysia is a moderate-risk destination. This is due to moderate crime rates and risk from civil unrest. Malaysia does have a high piracy threat which any mariners in the region should be cautious of.

The moderate crime threat is largely due to opportunistic crimes such as pick-pockets targeting travellers in overcrowded areas. Petty criminals are known to operate on motorcycles in Malaysia.

Demonstrations occur regularly in Malaysia, particularly in large cities. The moderate risk is largely due to the heavy-handed response from the authorities who use crowd control methods such as tear gas to disperse large protests.

Malaysia's high piracy threat is due to its strategic location along key maritime routes, particularly in the Strait of Malacca and the waters surrounding Borneo. These areas have historically been hotspots for piracy and other maritime crimes. Pirates sometimes hijack vessels, or they commit armed robberies of vessels in the area.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Cultural Tips

- Malay is the official language and is spoken in all areas of the country. The ethnic Chinese population also speaks several Chinese dialects. On the island of Borneo, numerous indigenous languages are common. English is taught in schools and is widely spoken. Malaysia is a predominantly Muslim country.
- Travellers should refrain from discussing religion and from commenting on Islam in particular.
- Tipping is not commonplace in Malaysia; however, it is acceptable for patrons of restaurants to give gratuities in addition to the standard 10 percent service charge. Although tipping at restaurants is optional, tipping wait staff at bars and clubs is appropriate and quite common.
- Conservative dress is advised for both men and women.
- The head is considered sacred. As such, travellers should avoid touching someone's head.
- When in a home, visitors should use their right hand to eat food when they are using chopsticks or their bare hand, as the left hand is considered unclean.
- Travellers should remove their shoes upon entering a home or place of worship.

- Visitors should avoid public displays of affection or anger, including yelling and arguing.
- When giving or receiving items from others, visitors should use both hands to handle the object.
- Travellers should avoid pointing with their index finger, as this is considered rude. Instead, travellers should motion with their palm down and thumb out, using their four fingers to beckon to the subject.
- Homosexuality is illegal in Malaysia, and can carry a prison sentence.

KEY FACTS	
CAPITAL	Kuala Lumpur (and Putrajaya)
CAPITAL CITY PHONE CODE	3
COUNTRY PHONE CODE	60
CURRENCY	Ringgit
ELECTRICITY	240 V, 50 Hz
GMT	+ 8
LANGUAGES	Bahasa Malaysia (Official), English (Recognised), and 137 local languages.
LEADERSHIP	King Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar. Head of Government: Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim
OFFICE WORK WEEK	Monday - Friday and 0800 - 1245 on Saturdays

KEY FACTS

OFFICIAL COUNTRY NAME	Malaysia
PLUG STYLES	Types A, C, G and M
RELIGION	Muslim (official) 63.5%, Buddhist 18.7%, Christian 9.1%, Hindu 6.1%, other (Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions) 0.9%, none/unspecified 1.8%
TIME ZONE OFFSET	UTC +8
TYPE OF GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Monarchy

RISK SUMMARY

Political - Low

Malaysia's government is a federal representative democratic constitutional monarchy. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, or King, is the constitutional monarch and head of state. The head of government is a role served by the prime minister, who is currently Anwar Ibrahim. Executive power is vested in the federal government and the 13 state governments. Legislative power is vested with the federal government and the 13 state assemblies.

Malaysia has experienced multiple leadership transitions, which have led to periods of political instability. Since 2018, Malaysia has had five prime ministers, however current Prime Minister Ibrahim, has led the country since 2022. Despite multiple leadership transitions, the nation is viewed as being politically stable. In July 02, there were protests in Kuala Lumpur demanding Ibrahim's resignation. In

June 2026, two states, Johor and Negeri Sembilan, called for early elections. The next general elections are expected in February 2028.

Political corruption is a concern in Malaysia. There have been multiple major cases including the 1MDB Scandal where billions of dollars were allegedly stolen from a government-run investment fund, leading to former prime minister Najib Razak being convicted. Razak was also charged with corruption and money laundering relating to the government COVID-19 fund.

Armed Conflict - Low

The risk of armed conflict is low in Malaysia due to its internal stability and good relations with its neighbours. Malaysia possesses territorial disputes with the Philippines over the Sabah district, though this is not actively contested, and the risk of open hostilities is low.

Malaysia is subject to some internal armed conflict, based predominantly on fighting between minority ethnic groups. Kuala Lumpur has been trying to combat terror threats on the eastern coast of Sabah using airstrikes and other measures. These incidents are rare and are highly unlikely to impact general travel.

The Patani region in southern Thailand has a history of low-level separatist violence linked to independence movements. Militant groups occasionally operate across the nearby border from northern Malaysia, targeting Thai security forces. While attacks are relatively infrequent, travellers should exercise increased caution when visiting areas near the Thailand–Malaysia border due to elevated security risks.

Terrorism - Moderate

Malaysia has a moderate terrorism threat. While there have been no recent major attacks by groups in the country, there have been multiple cases of lone-wolf attackers carrying out actions in the name of extremist ideologies. Multiple terrorist networks linked to both domestic and international groups operate on Malaysian territory or in bordering countries.

Parts of Malaysia remain a transit point and, to a certain extent safe haven, for members of militant groups such as the Islamic State, Abu Sayyaf and al-Qaeda. The terrorism risk is increased in Sabah where violent separatist movements and jihadist movements ideologically linked to the Islamic State have been growing in recent years. Malaysian security forces have designated the entire eastern portion of Sabah (extending from the town of Kudat in the north to the Tawau district near the border of Indonesia) as a security zone and frequently carry raids on suspected militants. There is a significant police and army presence in the area, and road checkpoints have increased recently. Travel to Sabah and the surrounding region is dangerous and should be conducted with the support of a trusted security provider.

Crime - Moderate

While violent crime is sporadic, petty crime is common, and foreigners are targeted for their perceived wealth. Petty theft, particularly purse snatching, pick-pocketing, smash-and-grab thefts from vehicles and residential burglaries are the most common crimes committed against foreign travellers, typically in crowded areas. Petty criminals are known to operate on motorcycles and target pedestrians who seem lost or distracted.

There have also been reports of travellers being drugged and sexually assaulted, especially around nightclubs and isolated areas. Solo female travellers are common targets. Unlicensed taxi drivers in downtown Kuala Lumpur have been involved in recent incidents of violent crime perpetrated against foreign tourists

The rate of scams in Malaysia has been increasing, particularly concerning online crimes. Travellers should remain vigilant against common scams, including fraudulent communications, financial schemes, and deceptive online offers. It is advisable to exercise caution when sharing personal or financial information and to verify the legitimacy of any suspicious requests or transactions.

There is a significant risk of kidnap-for-ransom in parts of the country, particularly the eastern coastal areas of Sabah. This stems from the regional threat of terrorism, with the main perpetrators being the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group. Abu Sayyaf has in the past kidnapped foreign nationals from the east coast of mainland Sabah, as well as from its islands and surrounding waters. These groups target

leisure yachts and commercial vessels alike. There is an increased risk of kidnapping and violence in the following Sabah state districts: Lahad Datu, Kunak, Semporna, Sandakan, Kinabatangan, and Beluran.

Civil Unrest - Moderate

The risk of civil unrest in Malaysia is moderate due to recent anti-government demonstrations.

Protests occur frequently in Malaysia and can occasionally turn violent with little warning. Protests are most common in Kuala Lumpur and other large urban areas. Domestic issues, such as corruption scandals involving government officials, lack of access to functioning infrastructure, and socioeconomic issues, are the main drivers of civil unrest. However, international developments can also drive protests.

Recently in July 2025, thousands demonstrated in Kuala Lumpur calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Ibrahim. Protesters were unhappy with the high living costs, amongst other reasons. The protest passed without any major violence breaking out.

Local law prohibits non-Malaysians from participating in public protests. Police forces are under little supervision, and there are widespread reports of police brutality against protesters. Police use violent crowd control methods, including tear gas, water cannons, pepper spray, and rubber bullets. In addition to carrying out arbitrary arrests of activists, police have been accused of torturing detainees.

It is highly advised that all large gatherings in Malaysia be avoided and that local media be monitored for updates about planned or ongoing protests. If caught in a protest, always follow the authority's directions and, if possible to safely do so, leave the area.

Maritime and Piracy - High

Malaysia is one of several countries with overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea. It maintains several territorial disputes with the Philippines over certain islands. Malaysia also claims several of the Spratly Islands, its territorial as-

sertions competing with those of China and Taiwan. However, Malaysia is not overly aggressive in pursuing its claims, largely because of concerns about damaging relations with its main economic partner, China.

Malaysia faces a significant piracy threat due to its strategic location along key maritime routes, particularly in the Strait of Malacca and the waters surrounding Borneo. These areas have historically been hotspots for piracy and other maritime crimes. The Malaysian government has committed to increasing patrols in the maritime areas near the Philippines. The Strait of Malacca is one of the busiest shipping lanes globally, connecting the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, making it a prime target for pirates. Pirates sometimes hijack vessels, or they commit armed robberies of vessels in the area. A report from the anti-piracy watchdog ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC) has reported that the number of piracy and armed robbery incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore Strait have increased nearly fourfold in 2025.

The waters off eastern Sabah, particularly near the Sulu Sea, are known for cross-border crime, including piracy, kidnapping for ransom, and smuggling. These activities are often carried out by armed groups based in the southern Philippines, such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). These groups target vessels, coastal communities, and even tourists for ransom. Vessels in the area have been advised to remain cautious when transiting the Sulu and Celebes Sea, most incidents occur in the area between Sabah (Malaysia) and Mindanao, the Sulu Islands and Palawan (Philippines). There is currently an 18:00 - 06:00 curfew in effect on water travel in six coastal districts of eastern Sabah state, including offshore areas up to three nautical miles from the coast.

Malaysia has several major ports, such as Port Klang, Tanjung Pelepas, and Penang, that play crucial roles in international trade. However, like many busy ports, these facilities face a range of navigational and operational challenges. The busier ports, such as Port Klang and Tanjung Pelepas, handle a large volume of vessels, the high traffic density increases the chances of collisions.

All vessels travelling in the waters off Lahad Datu and Sandakan in daylight hours must get a permit or permission from the police.

Health - Low

Healthcare in Malaysia is of decent quality in major urban centres. However, both government and private facilities charge for all services and can be expensive. Travellers should ensure that they have adequate travel and health insurance. In more rural areas, healthcare is less comprehensive. Medical facilities may be underdeveloped and poorly funded, and staff may not be adequately trained.

Mosquito-borne diseases, including dengue fever, occur year-round. Dengue is more common during the rainy season (April to October on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula; November to February in the east of the country) and has been on the increase in recent years. To mitigate against dengue fever, use DEET products to prevent mosquito bites, and also wear long-loose fitting light coloured clothing.

In May 2025, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) named Malaysia a nation with an increased rate of measles cases.

The states of Perlis, Kedah and Penang have been declared rabies-infected.

From June to October, Malaysia can experience air pollution from forest fires in Indonesia.

Environmental - Moderate

The wet season on the east coast falls between November and February, which is when the west coast experiences sunny, dry weather. Conversely, the wettest months on the west coast are April to October, which are the driest months on the east coast. During the wet season, heavy rains and thunderstorms occur almost daily, with flash-flooding reported occasionally following particularly severe downpours. In less-developed rural areas, hydrological hazards are likely to trigger widespread damage to infrastructure and disrupt travel.

When agricultural workers in Malaysia and nearby countries burn vegetation, especially from March-June and during September and October, air quality can become hazardous, notably to individuals with respiratory conditions. Poor air quality can also affect travel.

At least two people have been killed following mass flooding and landslides in parts of Malaysia. The fatalities were reported in the Perlis state in northern

Malaysia. Tens of thousands have had to evacuate to shelters due to the flooding.

Whilst Malaysia is not located on a major tectonic plate boundary, mild tremors can occasionally be felt, mainly due to earthquakes from neighbouring regions, including Indonesia or the Philippines.

Emergency response services may be limited in Malaysia, and as such, may not be able to adequately respond to natural disasters.

Transportation - Moderate

Malaysia has six international airports, with Kuala Lumpur International Airport being the busiest. Other major airports include Kota Kinabalu International Airport and Penang International Airport. Most major cities are well connected by air. Flights can sometimes be disrupted by haze caused by regional forest fires, particularly between June and October.

Malaysia has an extensive and generally high-quality road network, though infrastructure in East Malaysia is less developed. Drivers often do not stop when entering main roads from side streets, and traffic light compliance can be poor, which increases the risk of accidents. Exercise caution when driving or crossing roads.

Taxis are widely available in larger cities and towns and usually have meters. However, some drivers may not use the meter and may overcharge travellers, so always request the meter to be used before starting your journey. Ride-hailing apps like Grab are popular and considered safer alternatives, with designated pick-up points in major urban areas. Traditional trishaws, pedalled three-wheeled vehicles, are also available in some locations.

Buses operate between most major towns and cities, with Kuala Lumpur's central bus station, Puduraya, serving numerous daily routes. Accidents involving buses are relatively common, especially on mountainous routes, so travellers should exercise caution.

Malaysia's railway network offers both express and local train services operated by the national company, KTM. Express trains are air-conditioned and stop only at main stations, while local trains serve more stops, including remote areas. Rail schedules may change frequently, so check times before travelling.

EMERGENCY DETAILS

**LOCAL EMERGENCY SERVICES CAN BE REACHED BY DIALLING:
POLICE – 999, AMBULANCE – 999, FIRE - 994. RESPONSE SERVICES ARE
LIKELY TO BE LIMITED.**

POLICE NUMBER

999

EMERGENCY DETAILS	
AMBULANCE NUMBER	999
FIRE NUMBER	999
EMERGENCY DETAILS	An alternate number is the Royal Malaysia Police Operations Center in Kuala Lumpur, 03-2115-9999 or 03-2262-6555

TRAVEL

TRAVEL ADVICE

Tourists will generally not require a visa to travel to Malaysia, provided they are only in-country for up to three months. Visas for business travellers and longer stays will need to be obtained before travelling to the country. The Malaysian government is cracking down on illegal immigration, so travellers should not violate the terms of their visas. The visa requirements for crossing into Thailand via the land border sporadically change; travellers should contact local authorities should they wish to do this.

The following areas have an increased risk of kidnappings and violence: Lahad Datu, Kunak, Semporna, Sandakan, Kinabatangan, and Beluran. If travellers are planning on visiting these areas, they should make use of locally vetted drivers and close protection officers.

Same-sex sexual relations are illegal in Malaysia and are punishable by whipping and up to 20 years in prison. Malaysia is a multicultural country, but it is mostly Islamic. Standards of dress are conservative in many areas, including religious sites and government offices.

From 1 January 2024, travellers are required to submit a Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) three days before arrival in the country. The MDAC must be submit-

ted through the Malaysian Immigration website.

Sabah province is one of the highest-risk areas in Malaysia and is deemed a Special Security Area by the Malaysian government. There is a land and water-based curfew in place. Sabah's proximity to terrorist strongholds in the area surrounding Sulu means that there is the potential for terror attacks to occur. There is a high military presence in the area. In addition to terror attacks, there is a high risk of piracy in the waters surrounding Sabah. Abu Sayyaf militants have been active in the area, and have kidnapped foreign nationals both on land and in Malaysian waters. Only business-critical travel should be undertaken on the eastern coast of Sabah between the cities of Kudat and Tawau.

SIGNIFICANT DATES
<p>JUNE 21, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June Solstice: Malaysia - Seasonal
<p>JULY 07, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• George Town World Heritage City Day: Malaysia - Penang - Local holiday
<p>JULY 11, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penang Governor's Birthday: Malaysia - Penang - Local holiday
<p>JULY 17, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birthday of the Raja of Perlis: Malaysia - Perlis - Local holiday
<p>JULY 22, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sarawak Independence Day: Malaysia - Sarawak - Local holiday

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- **Almarhum Sultan Iskandar Hol Day:** Malaysia - Johor - Local holiday

AUGUST 26, 2026

- **The Prophet Muhammad's Birthday:** Malaysia - National

AUGUST 31, 2026

- **Malaysia's National Day:** Malaysia - National

SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

- **Malaysia Day:** Malaysia - National

SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

- **September Equinox:** Malaysia - Seasonal

OCTOBER 03, 2026

- **Birthday of the Governor of Sabah:** Malaysia - Sabah - Local holiday

OCTOBER 09, 2026

- **Birthday of the Governor of Malacca:** Malaysia - Malacca - Local holiday

OCTOBER 10, 2026

- **Birthday of the Governor of Sarawak:** Malaysia - Sarawak - Local holiday

SIGNIFICANT DATES

OCTOBER 24, 2026

- **Birthday of the Sultan of Pahang:** Malaysia - Pahang - Local holiday

NOVEMBER 06, 2026

- **Birthday of the Sultan of Perak:** Malaysia - Perak - Local holiday

RECENT ALERTS

FLASH FLOODING REPORTED IN PETALING JAYA



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



06-May-2026 10:25

According to local media sources, flash flooding has been reported in Petaling Jaya following heavy rain. Local media footage circulating online shows significant flooding. Ground sources have not reported any casualties. The full extent

RECENT ALERTS

of damage is unclear. Further information remains limited. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

PROTEST ONGOING IN DATARAN MERDEKA, KUALA KUMPUR



Category: Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate

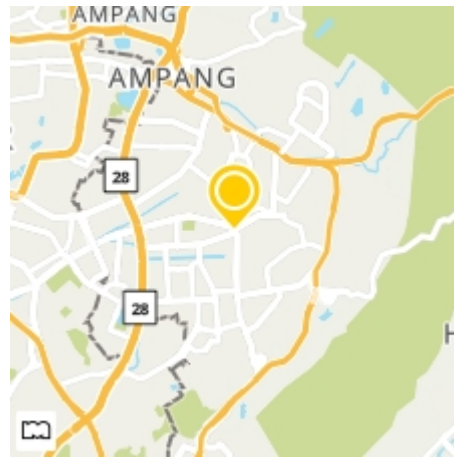


25-Apr-2026 11:28

Local media reports that protests are ongoing in Dataran Merdeka, in Kuala Lumpur City Centre. The protesters are demonstrating against government official Azam Baki. There is a heavy police presence on the scene. Footage circulating online shows minor clashes, however, there have been no casualties or damages reported at this time. Further information remains limited.

VAN CRUSHED BY LANDSLIDE IN AMPANG

RECENT ALERTS



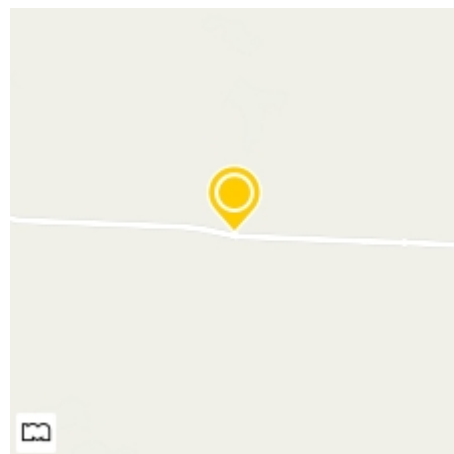
Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



19-Apr-2026 15:32

Local media reports that there have been two landslides within 16 minutes of each other in Ampang, in the Kuala Lumpur area. Images circulating online show a van crushed by a collapsed cliff. The landslides came following heavy rainfall. Emergency services have stated that there have been no injuries or damage to homes. Further information remains limited.

AT LEAST 400 EVACUATED AS FLOODS HIT NORTHERN SABAH DISTRICTS



RECENT ALERTS

Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate

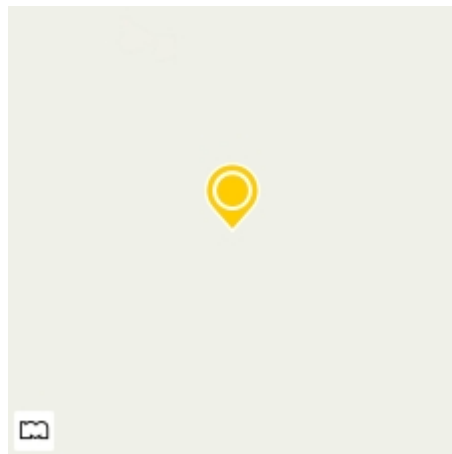


10-Mar-2026 11:26

Local media has reported that at least 400 people have been evacuated following flooding across northern Sabah districts. The local disaster management team have been operating since 1000 local time. The extent of damage to infrastructure is currently unknown. No casualties have so far been reported.

Provider: Solace Ops

EVACUATIONS ONGOING IN SABAH DUE TO FLOODING



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



26-Feb-2026 03:43

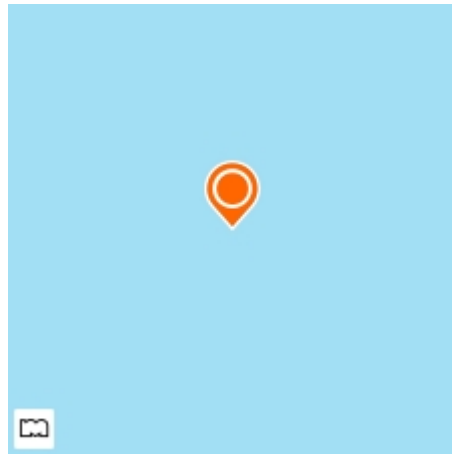
According to local media sources, evacuations are ongoing in Sabah due to flooding. It has been reported that at least 2,300 people have been evacuated. It has been reported that at least 140 villages have been affected by the flooding. It has been reported that multiple relief centres have been opened. Further in-

RECENT ALERTS

formation remains limited. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

Provider: Solace Ops

AT-SEA MAGNITUDE 7.1 EARTHQUAKE DETECTED NORTH NORTHWEST OF KOTA BELUD



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** High



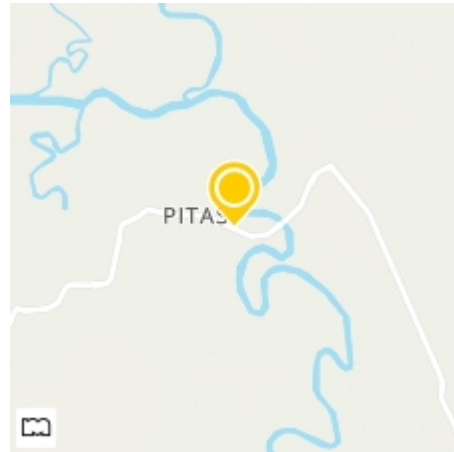
22-Feb-2026 17:20

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has detected a magnitude 7.1 earthquake 55 kilometres north northwest of Kota Belud, Malaysia. The tremor occurred at 16:57 UTC at a depth of 619.8 kilometres. No casualties, damages, or tsunami warnings have been reported. Aftershocks remain possible.

Provider: Solace Ops

EVACUATIONS ONGOING IN SABAH FOLLOWING FLOODING IN THE PITAS DISTRICT

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



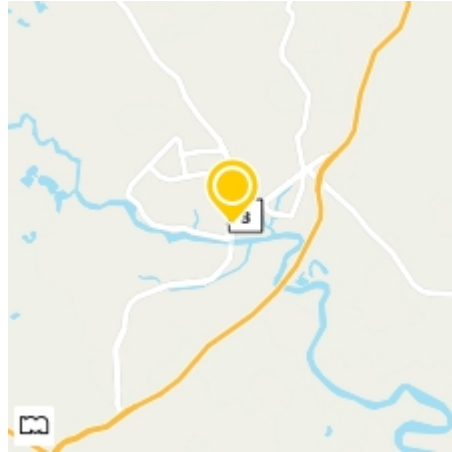
21-Feb-2026 03:30

According to local sources, over 1500 people have evacuated from the Pitas District following ongoing flooding in the region, affecting at least 30 villages. Several main roads remain impassable to small vehicles and homes in low-lying areas are submerged, including Kampung Taka and Kabatasan Laut. Further information is limited.

Provider: Solace Ops

EVACUATIONS ORDERED FOLLOWING PEATLAND FIRE IN KOTA TINGGI

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



27-Jan-2026 00:08

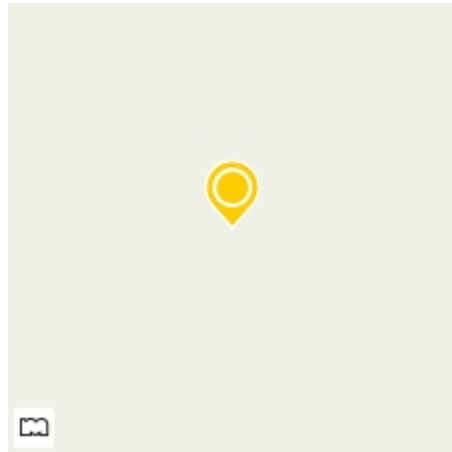
According to local media, evacuations have been ordered following a peatland fire covering over 12 hectares in the Jalan Sungai Kapal area of Kota Tinggi.

Strong winds have blown thick smoke into residential areas. Emergency services are responding with firefighting helicopters. Further information is currently limited.

Provider: Solace Ops

MONSOON SURGE AND HEAVY RAINS EXPECTED IN SARAWAK REGION UNTIL 05 JANUARY

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



31-Dec-2025 17:04

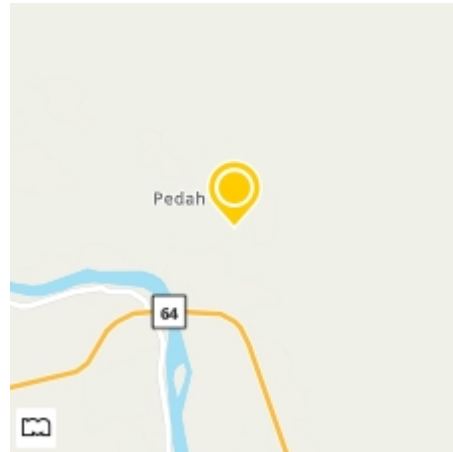
The Malaysian Meteorological Department has issued a warning for monsoon surges and heavy rain in the Sarawak region that will continue until 05 January.

There is the potential for strong winds and rough seas in the South China Sea during this period. The Continuous Rain Warning for Sarawak has been updated and will be in effect until 01 January.

Provider: Solace Ops

**FLOODING REPORTED IN PAHANG, KELANTAN AND
TERENGGANU**

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



19-Dec-2025 01:06

According to local media sources, flooding has been reported in Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu. The flooding has resulted in the displacement of over 15,000 people as of the 19 December. Further information remains limited at this time. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

Provider: Solace Ops

FCDO SUMMARY

Last updated: 03/19/2026 14:03:58

Warnings and insurance

Your travel insurance could be invalidated if you travel against advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Areas where **FCDO** advises against all but essential travel

Eastern Sabah coastal islands

FCDO advises against all but essential travel to all islands and dive sites off the coast of eastern Sabah from Sandakan to Tawau, including Lankayan Island, due to the threat of kidnapping. This does not apply to the mainland of Sabah.

Find out more about [why **FCDO** advises against travel](#).

Global travel impacts due to escalation in the Middle East

Escalation in the Middle East has caused widespread travel disruption, including airspace closures, delayed and cancelled flights.

Your travel plans may be affected, even if your destination is not in the Middle East. Before you travel:

- check travel advice for any countries or territories you are transiting through
- check for the latest updates from your airline or tour operator
- review your travel insurance policy for coverage
- monitor local and international media for the latest information and sign up for travel advice email alerts.
- be mindful of your permitted length of stay in Malaysia

Before you travel

No travel can be guaranteed safe. Read all the advice in this guide. You may also find it helpful to:

- see [general advice for women travellers](#)

- read our [guide on disability and travel abroad](#)
- see [general advice for LGBT+ travellers](#)
- read about [safety for solo and independent travel](#)
- see [advice on volunteering and adventure travel abroad](#)

Travel insurance

If you choose to travel, research your destinations and [get appropriate travel insurance](#). Insurance should cover your itinerary, planned activities and expenses in an emergency.

About [FCDO](#) travel advice

[FCDO](#) provides advice about risks of travel to help you make informed decisions. Find out [more about \[FCDO\]\(#\) travel advice](#).

Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated.

Follow [FCDO](#):

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)
- [Travel Aware on Instagram](#)

Entry requirements

This information is for people travelling on a full '[British citizen](#)' passport from the UK. It is based on the UK government's understanding of Malaysia's current rules for the most common types of travel.

The authorities in Malaysia set and enforce entry rules. If you're not sure how these requirements apply to you, contact the [Malaysian High Commission in the UK](#).

Passport validity requirements

To enter Malaysia, your passport must have an 'expiry date' at least 6 months after the date you arrive. Make sure it is undamaged, with no pages missing.

Check with your travel provider that your passport and other travel documents meet requirements. [Renew your passport](#) if you need to.

You will be denied entry if you do not have a valid travel document or try to use a passport that has been reported lost or stolen.

Dual nationals

Malaysia does not recognise dual nationality. You can be refused entry if you're found with a Malaysian passport and one of a different nationality. If you have dual nationality (not including Malaysian), enter and exit on the same passport.

When returning to the UK, British citizens must carry a valid [British passport](#) or [certificate of entitlement](#). See [Dual citizenship](#).

Visa requirements

You can visit Malaysia without a visa for tourism. You will normally be allowed to stay for 90 days on arrival.

If you want to stay for longer than 90 days or are not a tourist, you must apply for a visa from the nearest [Malaysian diplomatic mission](#) before you travel.

The Malaysian authorities do not tolerate illegal immigration. Do not overstay your visa or violate the terms of entry. Even if you overstay for just a few days, you can be:

- fined
- detained
- deported to the UK at your own cost
- banned from returning to Malaysia

Detention facilities can be poor with limited healthcare. The British High Commission is unable to help you stay in Malaysia or issue any document to support your overstay.

Keep a copy of your passport and visa safe in case your passport is lost. It may take time to get a replacement visa. If you cannot show your original visa or entry stamp on exit, you may be treated as an overstayer.

Submitting an arrival card

You must [submit an arrival card online](#) to enter Malaysia. Do this before you travel – airlines may ask for it at check-in. If you are not passing through immigration, you do not need to complete an arrival card. See the [Malaysian Immigration website](#) for further information, including exemption details.

Entering East Malaysia

If you're travelling between Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (sometimes known as Malaysian Borneo and made up of the states of Sabah and Sarawak), you must carry your passport. You will pass through immigration control and must get entry and exit stamps.

Vaccine requirements

To enter Malaysia, you must have a certificate to prove you've had a yellow fever vaccination if you're coming from a [country listed as a transmission risk](#).

For full details about medical entry requirements and recommended vaccinations, see [TravelHealthPro's Malaysia guide](#).

Drug screening

The Malaysian authorities could ask you to take a urine test on arrival if they suspect drug use. If they find drugs in your system, they could detain or deport you and ban you from returning to Malaysia. You could face these penalties even if you took the drug outside Malaysia, including in a country where it is legal.

Customs rules

There are strict rules about [goods you can take into or out of Malaysia](#). You must declare anything that may be prohibited or subject to tax or duty.

If you are not sure if it is legal to bring items, including medications, declare them on entry.

Importing firearms

It's illegal to import unlicensed firearms and ammunition into Malaysia. This includes spent ammunition and souvenirs from war museums. Do not take any

weapons or replica weapons into Malaysia. You may be detained and charged if you do. If you're convicted of dealing in illegal firearms, you can get a death sentence.

Taking money into or out of Malaysia

When you enter or exit Malaysia, you must declare cash in any currency or travellers cheques worth 10,000 US dollars or more. If you do not, customs officials could seize your money. You could get a fine of up to 3 million Malaysian ringgit and up to 5 years in prison.

Before you travel, you must get approval to take ringgit worth 10,000 US dollars or more into or out of Malaysia.

See the [Royal Malaysian Customs Department](#) website for more information.

Safety and security

This guide also has safety advice for [regions of Malaysia](#).

Terrorism

There is a high threat of terrorist attack globally affecting UK interests and British nationals, including from groups and individuals who view the UK and British nationals as targets. Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.

UK Counter Terrorism Policing has information and advice on [staying safe abroad](#) and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack. Find out [how to reduce your risk from terrorism while abroad](#).

Terrorism in Malaysia

Terrorist attacks in Malaysia cannot be ruled out.

Terrorism attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by foreign nationals, such as:

- bars and restaurants
- hotels
- markets

- shopping malls
- tourist attractions
- places of worship
- airports

You should be especially vigilant and maintain a high level of security awareness in crowded places and at large gatherings.

Terrorist kidnap

In Malaysia, there is a threat to foreigners of kidnapping in coastal areas of eastern Sabah from terrorist groups. The threat is particularly high between the towns of Sandakan and Tawau and on islands close to the Sulu Archipelago in the southern Philippines.

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), based in the Philippines, has previously kidnapped foreigners from the east coast of mainland Sabah, the islands and the surrounding waters. The group has murdered several hostages. Some groups operating in the southern Philippines, including factions of ASG, have pledged allegiance to Daesh and are likely to regard westerners as legitimate targets.

British nationals are seen as legitimate targets, including tourists, humanitarian aid workers, journalists and business travellers. If you are kidnapped, the reason for your presence is unlikely to protect you or secure your safe release.

The long-standing policy of the British government is not to make substantive concessions to hostage takers. The British government considers that paying ransoms and releasing prisoners builds the capability of terrorist groups and finances their activities. This can, in turn, increase the risk of further hostage-taking. The Terrorism Act (2000) makes payments to terrorists illegal.

Political situation

In response to the current situation in Israel and Palestine, there have been peaceful demonstrations in some Malaysian cities, including outside some western embassies.

It's illegal under Malaysian law for foreign nationals to take part in demonstrations or protests.

Monitor local and international media and avoid all demonstrations. Police can use tear gas and water cannons to control public protests.

Crime

Protecting yourself and your belongings

Bag-snatching is common, particularly in major cities. Thieves on motorbikes can target tourists. They can cut straps or pull off bags carried on the shoulder closest to the road. They have sometimes pulled people to the ground and killed or injured them if they try to hold onto their bags.

To protect yourself from petty crime, avoid carrying valuables and take particular care of your passport while:

- walking
- in cafes
- on aircraft
- in airport and railway terminals
- at hotels

Credit card and ATM fraud is widespread. Take care when using your card.

Personal security

There have been assaults and robberies, particularly around bars and nightlife areas. Do not open your hotel room door to strangers, especially late at night. This applies particularly to women travelling alone.

Drink spiking

There have been cases of strangers offering tourists a spiked drink, even in reputable bars or restaurants, and then robbing or assaulting them.

Methanol poisoning

There has been an increase in cases of serious illness caused by alcoholic drinks containing methanol in popular travel destinations around the world.

Even small amounts of methanol can kill. It is not possible to identify methanol in alcoholic drinks by taste or smell. See [Travel Aware Drink Spiking and Methanol Poisoning](#) for information about how to reduce the risks.

Seek urgent medical attention if you or someone you are travelling with show the [signs of methanol poisoning](#) after drinking.

Police reports

If you're a victim of crime, inform the local police and get a police report for insurance purposes.

Laws and cultural differences

Malaysia is a multicultural, majority Muslim country. Respect local laws, cultures, traditions and religions.

If you're a Muslim, you may be subject to local Sharia law.

Personal ID

By law you must carry ID. Always carry your passport.

Dress code

Dress modestly, particularly in conservative and rural areas. You may be refused entry to places of worship or government offices if you do not have your shoulders and knees covered or are not wearing closed shoes. Check the signs displayed at the entrance.

Ramadan

Ramadan is a holy month for Muslims. The dates vary by year and country. In Malaysia, Ramadan will take place in March 2025.

During this time, you should:

- check opening hours of shops and restaurants
- follow local dress codes – clothing that does not meet local dress codes may cause more offence at this time
- be aware of the risks of dehydration and that fasting can cause tiredness, particularly during the later afternoon and early evening

Get more advice when you arrive from your tour guide, hotel or business contacts.

Illegal drugs penalties

Possession, trafficking and manufacture of any illegal drugs are serious offences in Malaysia. This includes cannabis. British nationals have been caught carrying cannabis while transiting through Malaysia.

Airports in Malaysia have security equipment and procedures in place for scanning and detecting illegal substances, including cannabis. This is also used to scan all carry-on and checked-in baggage of transiting passengers.

The Malaysian authorities have a zero-tolerance policy to drug offences. Possessing drugs, even in very small quantities, carries severe penalties, including:

- arrest and detention
- a long jail sentence if charged and convicted
- a possible whipping
- a possible death sentence by hanging for drug trafficking

Legal processes before court hearings can be long and expensive. It can take many months for a case to go to trial and time served ahead of that will not be included as part of the sentence.

Criminal gangs in the UK and elsewhere are known to coerce people into carrying drugs across borders. Do not allow yourself to be persuaded.

It is important to be aware of your rights if you are detained by the police. See our [guidance for those detained or imprisoned in Malaysia](#).

Police often raid venues known to be frequented by foreigners. You may have to take a urine or blood test if there is a reasonable suspicion you have used drugs. You will be arrested if the test is positive.

LGBT+ travellers

Same-sex sexual acts are illegal in Malaysia under federal law. The Malaysian authorities sometimes carry out raids on LGBT+ spaces and events. Showing affection in public could attract negative responses from other members of the public. Openly LGBT+ safe spaces and support groups exist.

Read more [advice for LGBT+ travellers](#).

Outdoor activities and adventure tourism

Watersports and scuba diving

If you rent jet skis or any other type of watersports equipment, make sure adequate safety precautions are in place. Only use licensed operators, insist on training before use and make sure you're covered by your insurance.

Diving school standards are not always as high as in the UK. You should:

- check a dive operator's credentials
- make sure safety equipment is available on the boat, particularly oxygen
- ask about safety precautions, including the ability to transfer divers to a hyperbaric chamber

If you have not had any previous diving experience:

- ask your dive instructor to explain what cover they offer before signing up
- check what to do if something goes wrong, including how to call for help while at sea

The diving sites of HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales, which lie in international waters off Kuantan, have been declared 'protected places' under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986. Only dive there on a 'look not touch' basis. Make sure any boat operator you use holds a licence for diving at the wreck site.

See [watersports safety advice](#) from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA).

Transport risks

Road travel

If you are planning to drive in Malaysia, see [information on driving abroad](#).

You'll need both the [1949 international driving permit \(IDP\)](#) and your UK driving licence to drive in Malaysia. You cannot buy an IDP outside the UK, so get one before you travel. You must buy a new IDP for each additional year you plan to drive in Malaysia.

If you're in a road accident, it's illegal to leave the scene before the police arrive. If a crowd gathers, it may be safer to go directly to the nearest police station instead.

Drivers, particularly motorbike riders, do not always stop at traffic lights or pedestrian crossings.

There have been several fatal bus crashes, particularly on overnight journeys. Choose a reputable operator for your journey.

If you rent a motorbike, it's illegal not to wear a helmet.

Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence, and the traffic police regularly carry out breath tests. If you are found driving over the legal limit, you may get:

- a heavy fine
- a prison sentence
- deported

Road conditions in East Malaysia are not as good as those in Peninsular Malaysia.

Using taxis

At airports you pay for your taxi with a fixed-price coupon you buy at a counter in the terminal. In other areas, taxis should use a meter.

Sea and river travel

Some passenger boats have sunk due to overloading and poor maintenance. Take care when travelling by passenger ferry or speedboat. Avoid travelling on vessels that are clearly overloaded or in poor condition. Make sure life jackets are available.

Piracy in South-East Asian waters is an ongoing problem. There have been attacks against ships in and around Malaysian waters, particularly in the Strait of Malacca and the waters between Sabah and the southern Philippines. Be vigilant and take appropriate precautions. Reduce opportunities for theft, establish secure areas on board and report all incidents to the coastal and flag state authorities.

Extreme weather and natural disasters

Find out what you can do to [prepare for and respond to extreme weather and natural hazards](#).

Seasonal storms affect Malaysia. The timing of these storms depends on location in the country. Flooding and landslides are common and can cause significant damage to infrastructure. Essential services can be interrupted. For information on local weather, check the [Malaysian Meteorological Department](#).

Earthquakes can happen in Malaysia but are rare.

Regional risks

This section has safety advice for regions of Malaysia. It only covers regions where [ECDO](#) has specific advice.

You should also read [ECDO's overall travel advice](#) and [safety and security advice](#).

Eastern Sabah coast

[ECDO](#) advises against all but essential travel to all islands and dive sites off the coast of eastern Sabah from Sandakan to Tawau, including Lankayan Island, due to the threat of kidnapping. This does not apply to the mainland of Sabah.

Commercial shipping companies have been advised to adopt heightened vigilance when navigating the Sulu and Celebes seas. Most maritime incidents occur in the Sulu Sea in the area between Sabah (Malaysia) and Mindanao, the Sulu Islands and Palawan (Philippines).

The [Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia](#) (ReCAAP) advises all ships to re-route from the area where possible.

Health

Before you travel check that:

- your destination can provide the healthcare you may need

- you have [appropriate travel insurance](#) for local treatment or unexpected medical evacuation

This is particularly important if you have a health condition or are pregnant.

Emergency medical number

Call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Contact your insurance company quickly if you're referred to a medical facility for treatment.

Vaccine recommendations and health risks

At least 8 weeks before your trip:

- check the latest [vaccine recommendations for Malaysia](#)
- see where to get vaccines and whether you have to pay on the [NHS travel vaccinations page](#)

See [what health risks you'll face in Malaysia](#), including:

- malaria
- dengue
- rabies in the states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Sarawak

Altitude sickness is a risk in parts of Malaysia, including Mount Kinabalu in eastern Malaysia (Malaysian Borneo). Read more about [altitude sickness on TravelHealthPro](#).

Air pollution

High levels of air pollution in major towns and cities in Malaysia may make respiratory conditions worse.

Forest fires in Indonesia can cause haze between June and October. Haze can cause disruption to local travel, regional air travel and to schools.

Monitor the [Air Pollutant Index Management System \(APIMS\)](#) updates and health advisories issued by the [Malaysian Department of Environment](#).

Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or bought in the UK can be different in other countries.

Read [best practice when travelling with medicines on TravelHealthPro](#).

Healthcare in Malaysia

Government and private hospitals charge for all services. Private care is expensive. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

ECDO has a [list of medical providers in Malaysia](#) where some staff will speak English.

There is also [guidance on healthcare if you're living in Malaysia](#).

Travel and mental health

Read [ECDO guidance on travel and mental health](#). There is also [mental health guidance on TravelHealthPro](#).

Getting help

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (ECDO) cannot provide tailored advice for individual trips. Read this travel advice and carry out your own research before deciding whether to travel.

Emergency services in Malaysia

Police and ambulance: 999

Fire: 994

Ambulance (from a mobile): 112

Contact your travel provider and insurer

Contact your travel provider and your insurer if you are involved in a serious incident or emergency abroad. They will tell you if they can help and what you need to do.

Refunds and changes to travel

For refunds or changes to travel, contact your travel provider. You may also be able to make a claim through insurance. However, insurers usually require you to talk to your travel provider first.

Find out more about [changing or cancelling travel plans](#), including:

- where to get advice if you are in a dispute with a provider
- how to access previous versions of travel advice to support a claim

Support from **FCDO**

FCDO has guidance on staying safe and what to do if you need help or support abroad, including:

- finding English-speaking [lawyers](#), [funeral directors](#) and [translators and interpreters](#) in Malaysia
- dealing with a [death in Malaysia](#)
- being [arrested or imprisoned in Malaysia](#)
- getting help if you're a [victim of crime](#)
- what to do if you're [in hospital](#)
- if you're [affected by a crisis](#), such as a terrorist attack

Contacting **FCDO**

Help abroad

See [how to get help from the UK government abroad](#) including in an emergency.

Help in the UK

You can call **FCDO** in London if you need urgent help because something has happened to a friend or relative abroad.

Telephone: 020 7008 5000 (24 hours)

[Find out about call charges](#)

Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated.

Follow ECDO:

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)

Risk information for British companies

The Overseas Business Risk service offers [information and advice for British companies operating in Malaysia](#) on how to manage political, economic, and business security-related risks.

PACK SMART

Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Carry a duplicate wallet with small denomination notes and old cards that you could relinquish if threatened by robbers. Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Always check the destination restrictions regarding medications when planning your trip.

STAY SAFE: Hotels



Request a hotel room between the third & seventh floor. Ground floor rooms should always be avoided as they are easily accessible from the outside. Higher levels mean in the event of a fire there are many stairs to navigate and in some countries firefighters may not have ladders capable of reaching higher than the seventh floor.



Check your room phone works in case you need to call reception for help.



Know where your fire exits are. Count the number of doors to the fire exit from your room so you can feel your way in the event of a fire and a smoke-filled corridor.



To prevent unauthorised entry into your hotel room, make sure the windows and doors lock. Bolt the deadbolt and use the door wedges you've brought with you from home to wedge the main door closed.

TRAVEL SAFE: Out & About



When you are out and about, be aware of your surroundings - don't display obvious wealth, such as expensive jewellery, watches and mobile phones.



Use ATMs inside banks and shopping centres, where there is greater security and CCTV. Safety in numbers. If you are travelling with colleagues, stay together for meals and trips out. If you are alone, avoid quiet areas and trust your instincts.

Road traffic accidents are still the greatest threat to travel safety.



- Use licensed taxis.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Keep doors locked & windows up.
- Avoid night-time driving.
- If the driver is using a phone or driving dangerously, insist they slow down/stop using their phone.

Check in regularly. Use the 'Check In' button on the Solace Secure app so your location can be monitored and you can view all intelligence alerts within your vicinity.

SAFE TRAVEL: Health Tips

See a medical travel specialist at least 4 weeks before travel.

Ask about recommended vaccines for specific destinations.

First aid kit with regular & special medication for trip - carry in hand luggage.

Evacuation & travel insurance to cover health emergencies while abroad.



Take an extra month of prescribed medication for pre-existing conditions.

Risk of malaria - take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and take malaria pills as advised.



Avoid drinking alcohol and becoming dehydrated.

Verify & consume safe water and food. Have a supply of medicine for self-treatment of diarrhoea.



Excessive sun exposure should be minimised by the use of sunscreen - sun can be more intense over water, snow and at altitude.

Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies.

THINK SAFE: Know Your Destination

Understand the culture of your destination. Dress and behave so as not to cause offence or draw attention.



Know if the tap water is suitable to drink if not; only accept water from a sealed bottle.

Avoid ice in your drinks & salad washed in tap water.

Research where you are travelling to. Make a note of the local emergency services number. Know the current security and medical threats and advice. See the FCO website for general information (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

DOCUMENT SAFE: Know Your Destination

Take photos/scans of your essential documents and email them to yourself. You can then access them remotely if your belongings are stolen:

- Passport
- Driver's Licence
- Travel Insurance Document
- Visa
- Medical Certificates

For 24/7 travel risk advice and emergency assistance contact Solace Global
Risk operations: + 44 (0)1202 795 801

The Solace Secure desktop and app provide up-to-the-minute alerts, providing
latest information on your travel location even when you are there.

CONTACT SOLACE GLOBAL RESPONSE TEAM

This report has been prepared for you by Solace Global Risk Ltd.

If you need urgent help, advice or assistance at any time please contact the 24/7 Response and Assistance Team.

If you have a question about this travel advice or any other location please email SGR@solaceglobal.com for further safety and security information.

For support using your Solace Secure platform or app please contact support@solaceglobal.com.

Solace Global Risk, Twin Sails House, West Quay Road, Poole, BH15 1JF, UK