

Security Index

Managing Personal Security for School Trips	02
Preparation	
Awareness	
Low Profile	
Unpredictable Routine	
Communications	
Layers of Protection	
Before Leaving	06
Documents	
Luggage/Clothing	
Additional Preparations	
When Travelling	08
Arrival at your destination	
Driving around town	
At the hotel	
Staying safe	
If Things Go Wrong	10
Car Accident	
Earthquake	
Flooding	
Landslide	
Riots and Mob Violence	
Bomb Blast / Terrorist attack	
Abduction / Kidnapping	
Annexes	
ANNEX A – Country Profiles:	
Brunei	13
Cambodia	16
China	22
Europe	30
India	30
Indonesia	39
Japan	46
Korea	49
Laos	54
Malaysia	57
Myanmar	63
Philippines	68
Taiwan	75
Thailand	79
Vietnam	87
United Arab Emirates	91
United States	97
ANNEX B - How to use us	102
ANNEX C - Preparation checklist	103
ANNEX D - Briefing checklist for driver	104

Managing Personal Security for School Trips

There are six basic principles of security that, when applied sensibly, reduce the risk of exposure to violence. These principles are applicable in any environment, but are often most relevant in situations where violent crime, terrorism or conflict prevail. The six principles of Personal Security are (they apply to groups of travellers equally):

PREPARATION

Thorough preparation is the most important habit or behaviour that will reduce risk and risk to groups from exposure to crime and/or violence. Risks can be substantially reduced by:

- being aware of the threats in the country(ies) you are travelling to,
- staying alert to the changing situation,
- applying simple precautions.

Thorough preparation is also a key ingredient to successful emergency response.

- Preparation
- Awareness
- Low Profile
- Unpredictable Routine
- Communications
- Layers of protection

Regardless of what support you have, be it a local staff member, a driver, a security escort or local law enforcement support, your security is ultimately your responsibility as an individual or as a teacher looking after a group of students (which of course carries increased responsibility; which in turn requires increased management, preparation and vigilance. By accepting that this is the case and acknowledging that you can take steps to reduce your and your group's exposure to danger, you will be starting to take control of the situation. Make an effort to understand the environment that you will be operating in, identify what threats abound in that environment, be conscious of your own vulnerabilities and take action to mitigate the risks, before you travel.

Note: It is recommended that the students are briefed verbally on safety and security requirements prior to any travel.

AWARENESS

The key to any security plan is that individuals should be aware of the risks associated with a given environment and their conduct within that environment. They should also understand that although groups can provide an element of increased protection they can also represent a more valuable target for determined criminals. Be alert to the fact that even when you take precautions, a residual security risk does exist and that you may become a target. Make security awareness a habit by incorporating the following steps into your daily routine.

- Before leaving your hotel or residence, review your diary, prepare for the day ahead, decide on the route you will take and brief your driver (A quick briefing to the students at

the beginning of the day will also assist and remind them of the issues and what you expect from them).

Tips:

- The head of any group should consult the country profiles on the Travel Security Online website, available via the two main websites of International SOS and Control Risks: www.internationalsos.com and www.control-risks.com. These will provide you with travel, security and medical information.

NOTE: For each trip that involves groups of students it is recommended that the organiser telephones or emails International SOS and requests tailored information for the specific trip being organised. The information in the website is aimed at adult travellers and not schools with student groups travelling. A location that may be suitable for a group of adults to travel to may not be suitable for a group of students. Be prepared to provide the following information:

Size of Group

Numbers (Adults and children)

Nationalities

Full itinerary (dates, counties and cities to be visited, activities)

Types of transport

Any security accompanying or formal assessment carried out?

All of this information and the advice given will be stored in a case file; which will assist greatly in the event that the group needs any assistance when travelling.

- You should consult your own country's travel advisory to find out about current restrictions and latest information (of course with groups there will be different nationalities travelling it is advised that you understand what each country is recommending. These sites however are aimed at the general travel population of the said country and typically more conservative than targeted business travel assessments by commercial security providers.

- Country risk ratings have a direct impact on the amount of preparation you should put in before a trip. The higher the risk rating, the more preparation should go into the trip, both for the individual traveller and the organisation sending him/her.

- Be aware of high risk areas along the routes you travel and identify safe spots*.

- Look out:

- for strangers waiting by the house or office.

- for cars following you and other unusual incidents.

- if you see suspicious activities, report them to the police or your local guard force*.

- Be particularly alert when arriving at or leaving commonly used places, such as your home, hotels, schools, offices, restaurants and clubs.

- Maintain a healthy suspicion of anyone who shows you undue attention.

- Your group members should be alert about their security environment and maintain a healthy suspicion towards anyone not well know to them.

- Avoid any situations where you may become isolated and at risk. Utilise local knowledge and guidance for high risk locations, activities or neighbourhoods. Such advice should be used in conjunction with your own independent assessment

* This principle applies more specifically to short term assignments or unfamiliar locations.

LOW PROFILE

Criminals will normally select an individual because that person has come to their attention for some reason and there is an opportunity to profit by targeting them. It is fundamental that individuals should attract as little attention to themselves as possible, and attempt to follow these simple rules (groups of children may represent a vulnerable target unless managed closely):

- Try to blend in (understand this is difficult with a group of school children).
- Avoid overt signs of wealth, such as expensive watches or jewellery. Personal equipment such as laptops, digital cameras and phones should be carried in backpacks and be hidden from view when not in use.
- Avoid talking loudly to the point where people start to pay attention to you, particularly if your accent or language may increase the risk that you may be targeted.
- Do not discuss details of your plans or your itinerary with individuals not known to you. Only share them with people you can trust.
- Carefully select the vehicles you will be using in order to not attract attention; but also consider their suitability to transport children (Seat belts, first aid kits, spares).
- Ensure that, as far as possible, personal information, passports (home address or family details) are properly safeguarded, i.e. that your details are not published in telephone directories, on luggage tags.
- Be careful when speaking on the telephone. Ensure that you identify who the caller is before giving any personal or family details, or before answering any seemingly innocent questions. This is of particular importance in hotels or other short term accommodation.

UNPREDICTABLE ROUTINE

For criminals and terrorists, a routine provides the best means to successfully attack a target, allowing greater planning around timings and locations to be conducted.

- It is important that, where possible, you avoid setting patterns. While you often have very few options to vary your routes to the schools from hotels, shops or associations that you visit regularly, any variation in route or timing makes you a more difficult target.
- You are most vulnerable at the start and end of your trip, as these are the most predictable parts of the journey. Be most alert in these phases of the journey.
- Ensure your driver is well briefed on the higher risks associated with drop off and pick up locations, and ensure they actively monitor the environment.

COMMUNICATIONS

Modern communications eliminate the requirement for individuals to live, work, play or travel in isolation from support. After the principle of Preparation, Communications is the most important consideration in managing security risk. Make sure you:

- Always test your equipment, keep it fully charged and ensure that you have a redundancy/back up plan (phone card, car charger or coins) especially if you are in a high or extreme risk location. (remember the older students will have mobile phones also)
- Always carry emergency contact details in hard copy as well as in mobile phones (wallet card or membership card)
- If you are on a long term visit, carry the contact telephone numbers for the police/the local guard force, the embassy or consulate, your office, schools you are visiting. Define with them in advance what actions to take in the event of an emergency.

- If you are on a short term visit, carry the contact telephone numbers for your office, partner, client, a parents list and transport provider.
- Establish a lost contact plan, which makes your actions predictable to your loved ones or support staff in the event of an emergency (Parents may be very interested to know what planning is in place prior to any trip).

In the event of an incident, your and the groups safety may depend upon how effectively you are able to maintain communications with your support elements. When developing your communications plan for high or extreme risk environments, you should ensure you have a variety of means available.

These could include:

- Primary - Mobile Phone or PDA
- Secondary - Landline (public or hotel phone), email or fax UHF/VHF/HF radio
- Alternate/Back-up - Satellite Phone

In volatile environments, where power supply is not guaranteed and mobile coverage may be limited, you should insist upon provision of a satellite phone as a back up form of communication. Make sure the satellite phone provider you have chosen has adequate coverage in the region. Be aware that when the mobile coverage is poor, you may still be able to use SMS text messages to communicate.

Tip:

- Check the network that is used in the destination country. If possible carry a quad-band phone that will provide the widest mobile coverage.
- Maintain power in all handheld devices and keep a back-up battery charger and car charger (available in most international airports) to recharge your phones if the power network fails.

LAYERS OF PROTECTION

There is no single measure which will guarantee your security. A sound security plan means applying several layers of protection, including both physical and procedural elements.

- Adopt appropriate security measures and maintain them. These measures should be in direct relation to the risks you are likely to face in the country you are travelling to. The requirement to call International SOS prior to every trip will ensure that you not only have tailored advice that meets your requirements but also provides travel advice.
- Acknowledge the dangers associated with creating a routine within normal daily life.
- Always remain alert! Effective personal and group security must be applied 24 hours a day, even on the return leg of your journey.

Tip:

Wherever you are in the world, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, security experts are ready to take your call and provide support and assistance whilst you are travelling.

Before leaving

DOCUMENTS

- Make copies of all your key documents (you need copies of all student passports and visas – make sure the school also has a copy). One to take with you and store in a different place to the originals, one to leave with your family, and one to leave at the school.
- Documents you should copy include: passport, visas, credit cards, itinerary, contact numbers, vaccination card, prescriptions and driving licenses.
- Carry passport photos with you as well.
- Remove all non-essential paperwork from your wallet.
- Ensure that you have communicated your essential contact details to your school.
- You can scan the relevant pages of your passport and send them to an easily accessible e-mail account. Should you lose your passport or if it is stolen, you can go to the business centre of a major hotel or anywhere with an internet connection and print a copy of the document. It will make it easier for the Consulate to issue emergency travel documents. Remember to erase this information upon your return.
- In case of a long term travel, purchase maps for your destination. You can mark and number the regular routes you will use, noting down the various safe stopping points en-route. When you prepare your diary, designate which route you plan to use and keep this information on a need-to-know basis (look after these maps as they would also be useful to a criminal – let your school have a copy also).

Tip:

You can use your wallet card or membership contact number to seek guidance from a security professional on this protocol.

LUGGAGE/CLOTHING

- Lock your luggage with a padlock – TSA preferred (everyone).
- Prefer hard shell luggage to soft bags, avoid designer brands that could attract attention
- Label your luggage with your home address in a covered or sealed tag (so as not to indicate your nationality).
- Put a similar label inside your luggage too.
- Remove frequent flyer cards (these status symbols might attract the wrong kind of attention in some countries).
- Pack comfortable and suitable clothing depending on weather conditions and cultural customs at your destination.
- Always keep a change of clothes in your hand luggage.
- Pack a small medical kit in your checked-in luggage when travelling to High Risk countries and countries with low medical assistance standards.
- Be aware of air travel safety regulations / legislation on liquids: these may change at short notice and may differ from country to country, so keep yourself informed about what you can and cannot take with you.

Tip:

If you are travelling to the United States, the padlocks you use should ideally be approved by the Transportation Security Administration. These are compatible with the US Customs master key, which allows officials to inspect your bag(s) and lock them up

again. If your bag has been inspected, Customs officials will generally leave a card (notification of search) in your luggage for official verification.

ADDITIONAL PREPARATIONS

- Review the profile of your country of destination with the Travel Security Online website, available via the two main portals of International SOS and Control Risks' websites. **Important: For each trip the leader must call International SOS so that they can receive tailored advice for each trip.**
- Identify the vaccinations and appropriate preventative medications required for the region you and the group are travelling to.
- If you are on a long term visit, learn enough of the local language to identify yourself, acknowledge directions, express common greetings and courtesies, and ask for help.
- Arrange transportation at your destination in advance of your trip whenever possible (important when transporting children for safety and "Duty of Care" reasons).
- Pack a door wedge in your suitcase, it can help secure your hotel door if the lock is faulty and gives you additional reassurance.
- Check if it is legal to import foreign currency, order/obtain notes including small denominations prior to your trip.
- Ideally, obtain local currency before you travel from your bank or at your airport of departure.
- Run a final check of your and the students bags to ensure that you and they do not have any dangerous or prohibited items.
- Allow at least one hour for check-in for domestic flights and at least two to three hours for international flights (larger groups will require longer).

Tip:

For more information about the type of vaccines you may need for your trip, or on international travel and health more generally, please consult International SOS' website at www.internationalsos.com or the World Health Organisation's website at www.who.int/ith/en/

ARRIVAL AT YOUR DESTINATION

- Be aware of airport formalities prior to arrival. In some countries, men and women will queue in separate lines at customs/immigration (this could be important in controlling children of different sexes if you do not have a female teacher to escort).
- Be polite and stay calm when dealing with police and immigration officials, who can be officious and heavy-handed.
- Preferably, arrange to be met at the airport by someone known personally to you. Travellers may be at higher risk of theft and touting at airports than elsewhere. Ensure you pay particular attention to your valuables at security check points and transport pickup/drop off locations.
- Before you collect your baggage, have a good look around to identify the exit; once you have your bag, you can walk confidently in that direction without appearing lost.
- Identify or contact your hotel representative/driver/school escort before you head through the exit (have their phone number – make sure your phone as group leader can roam).
- If you are going to use a taxi at all, only use official, licensed taxis. If there is no meter, agree a price beforehand
- If you are met by a driver and have identified your escort (checked his/her name,

where he/she is taking you) introduce yourself. Do not let that person walk off without you or the students. Stay with him/her.

▪ Where possible, avoid arriving after dark or after a long overnight flight with little sleep, where you and your group will be more vulnerable.

Tip:

Jetlag and high alcohol consumption are some of the key factors contributing to you and your group's disorientation, putting your personal safety at risk.

When Travelling

DRIVING AROUND

- Avoid driving yourself, unless you are very familiar with the environment and the local rules of the road as traffic accidents represent the main risk you may expose yourself to. This includes the risk of mob violence in the event of an accident, particularly if it involves children. (We advise against self drive minibuses for school trips)
- Ideally, ensure you know where you are and where you are going at all times.
- Confirm that your driver knows how to get to the destination, has had sufficient sleep and is fit to drive.
- On a long term trip, a hired driver should be able to speak your language, should have basic defensive driving skills as well as some basic first aid training.
- Seatbelts must be used – try to only use vehicles with these fitted including buses.
- Wind your windows up and lock your doors at all times. Make sure the children are aware of this requirement also which make it difficult for anyone unwelcome to enter your vehicle (important that the air conditioning works well).
- Review a route and mark a map for safe areas en route such as embassies / consulates, offices and major international hotels. Be aware that military establishments and police stations represent a higher risk in some countries.
- Remain vigilant when approaching choke points (check-points, traffic lights) and intersections, as this is where vehicles are more vulnerable to attacks.
- Ensure your driver keeps an acceptable gap between your vehicle and the vehicle in front both when driving and when stopped. As a general rule, you should be able to see the rear tyres of the car in front. This will allow him better awareness of other cars, room to stop and room to manoeuvre away from danger.
- If an attempt to stop your vehicle is made by persons with crime in mind and it is damaged but drive-able, tell your driver to continue driving until you reach a known safe area to avoid being further ambushed or carjacked (This is very much dependant on the situation and whether this is the safest option – in some circumstances you would have to comply with any attackers especially if they are armed)

Tip:

Check the tyres before boarding the vehicle. Make sure there is a spare tyre (inflated and of the right size and type), a jack to lift the vehicle as well as tyre changing equipment. Ensure basic maintenance checks are conducted including radiator, water and fluids, oil and petrol/diesel. Be aware that in some European countries, your emergency equipment in the vehicle must include a fluorescent jacket.

AT THE HOTEL

- In locations where terrorism is identified as a threat; when you check in to your hotel rooms arrange to have a room that faces away from a main street and any car park in countries where terrorism is or has been an issue. Ask for a room between the second and seventh floor (generally the maximum reach of fire ladders), close but not immediately adjacent to a fire escape.
- On your way to your rooms, locate the fire escapes, extinguishers and fire alarms. Once you have dropped your luggage in your rooms, it is recommended that the escorting teachers walk between the rooms and the fire escapes. Count (and remember) the number of steps taken or the number of doors between rooms and the fire escapes (this will help you in case of power cut or smoke when evacuating). Open the fire escape doors (if not alarmed) and check that they are operable and not blocked. If they are blocked, report it to the hotel management and consider changing accommodation.
- Use the spy-hole and door chain if your room is equipped with them when answering the door (inform the students of this).
- Always make it a habit to leave your essential items (keys, passport, laptop, wallet, medical kit, small torch, etc) in a “grab bag” that you could take with you immediately (probably teachers only – but if some students have these it would be good also). This ensures that you do not waste valuable time looking for these items in an emergency.
- Have your shoes ready by the door as well. Most common injuries to hotel guests are burns and cuts sustained when evacuating through flame and broken glass with bare feet.
- Never leave your laptop unattended or unlocked – always assume your room might be searched. Use laptop cable locks.
- Do not leave important documents or your itinerary unattended.

Tips:

When in doubt about the quality of the security arrangements at your hotel, act by checking into another international standard hotel. You can use your wallet card or membership contact number to seek guidance from a security professional.

STAYING SAFE

- Consider carrying a ‘robbery’ wallet/purse in your pocket or handbag. The robbery wallet should have your daily cash needs and redundant business cards and old photos. This wallet should be handed over to your aggressor if you are victim of a robbery. Keep a credit card and extra cash in a pocket, but use the robbery wallet as your daily source of cash. Remove any recent family photos or other items that may encourage you to fight not to handover your wallet. Ladies should carry handbags on the opposite side of traffic. This reduces the risk of them being snatched by passing motorcyclists (Control what the students carry throughout).
- Avoid moving the group about on foot unless you are confident of the security situation. Do not walk at night or in industrial or rundown parts of town at all. Do not take shortcuts away from main roads: these have greater numbers of pedestrian traffic, lighting and passing cars.
- Watch your drinks being poured when you are out and do not leave your drinks unattended. In general do not accept drinks from individuals and avoid going to nightclubs or bars by yourself or with individuals you do not know well. If you lose eye contact with your glass, do not drink from it again (it is recommended that only light amounts of alcohol are consumed when in control of children).
- Avoid any discussion of politics, religion or key government / authority figures (Remind the children of this).

- Avoid using public transport as much as possible.

Tip:

In certain countries, you may be given a “take me home card” indicating your hotel / office location. Keep it separate from your wallet.

If Things Go Wrong

In the event of an injury or an incident that affects safety or security (in these cases we recommend being over cautious), you should first call the local emergency number. Your second call should be to one of the International SOS Assistance Centres to register your condition. They operate 24 hours a day. A doctor or security specialist will take your call and will communicate in your language.

International SOS will:

- Recommend a hospital if required, liaise with the hospital and follow up your treatment.
- Arrange your transfer to an appropriate and adapted medical structure.
- At your request, an ambulance will be arranged by International SOS.
- The security specialist will give immediate advice and if required start to make arrangements for your and your groups continued safety.

Make sure you always carry your wallet card or membership card with you as well as a list of emergency numbers.

CAR ACCIDENT

Procedures will vary depending upon where you are in the world, but in all circumstances, you will need to consider the local legal requirements. In certain countries it is not advisable to stay at the accident site, where as in other locations, you should remain at the scene of the accident (The safety of the children comes first).

- If you need to leave the scene for your own safety or that of the children, you must report the accident as soon as possible to the local authorities. It may be safer for you to do this via your Embassy or Consulate, but International SOS will help where possible.
- Phone or ask someone to call the police and ambulance.

Tip:

Before you travel to a high risk location, contact us to seek advice from a security professional to find out about the best way to deal with such incidents.

EARTHQUAKE

If you are inside a building:

- Move to a sturdy fixture or furnishing that is unlikely to compress when lightweight ceiling materials, fittings and glass fall, and that is also unlikely to crush you. If possible open your main escape door immediately as they can become jammed with building movement!
- Hold on tight and move with the furnishing.
- Open fire doors as buildings can changes shape slightly jamming doors closed.
- When safe to do so, move out of the building and stay at least 100 metres away from any structure. This includes telecommunications poles and electricity pylons. Do a headcount.
- Be prepared for aftershocks.

- Contact your office to let them know you are safe.
- In some countries where building standards are questionable and the building is only of 1 or two storeys; if you fear the building is about to collapse then it may be safer to get outside – make sure there is no falling debris – gather the students and move. (unfortunately there are no guarantees in this – it is a call that has to be made by the teachers at the time).

If you are outside a building:

- Head for open spaces and stay there.
- Do headcount.
- Be aware of overhead wires, power lines, trees and material falling from buildings.
- Stay away from vehicles that may be thrown around.

FLOODING

- Always check if you are in an area at risk of flooding first.
- If the possibility of flooding has been identified, make an early decision to evacuate or prepare the site to resist flooding.
- If on foot, move to high ground and take shelter until the rain/floods subside. Call for emergency assistance. Keep a headcount.
- If travelling by vehicle, head for higher ground and wait for the flooding to subside. Carry a tow rope, shovel/spade, axe and canvas or waterproof plastic sheeting.
- Do not attempt to cross waterways: find another route to reach your destination, or seek higher ground and wait for the water to subside. You should not attempt to ford flooded roads as floodwater may have washed away the surface, and even slow moving water can wash away people and vehicles. Avoid entering all flood water due to the risks of disease contamination and debris.
- Be aware of the risk of flash floods.

LANDSLIDE

- Avoid travelling on roads, tracks or off-road in mountainous areas subject to rock/mudslides during heavy rain or snow.
- Do not travel on 'at risk' sections of road after dark (or better avoid all travel after dark).
- If you encounter rock/landslides en route, check if it is safer to turn back or continue your journey, based on local advice and your appreciation of the situation.
- If moving, try to stay in the centre of the road/track and avoid close proximity to the edge, which may collapse under vehicle if the soil is loosened. Assess the route on foot if necessary and use a guide to walk the route in front of the vehicle to assess difficult sections of the road. Travel should only take place by day.

RIOTS AND MOB VIOLENCE

- If you find yourself or your group in the vicinity of a demonstration, immediately move away to a safe area. Do not take pictures (Control the children).
- If you are stuck between police lines and an advancing crowd, seek to move off the street at right angles without running, and move indoors immediately if you can.
- If away from accommodation/hotel, try to seek refuge in an international hotel.
- If you find yourself driving into a riot, instruct your driver to slow down and make a turn so as to avoid both rioters and the responding security forces.
- If this is not possible, stop the vehicle and attempt to reverse. If you are blocked in, assess your vehicles distance from the crowd and make a decision as to whether you can all escape on foot.

- Keep your driver with you and agree where you are heading. When you decide to go, park the vehicle, exit and walk briskly away from the crowd.
- Do not run, unless you are being pursued.
- Any sign of panic or rapid movement can attract a mob's interest and should be avoided in these situations.

BOMB BLAST & TERRORIST ATTACK

- If you are uninjured, gather the students, head count, move away from the blast site toward a secure area (Remember if the attack is not directly against your building it may be safer to stay there, away from windows and outside walls).
- Terrorists will often place a secondary device in vehicles or bins located near the scene to cause maximum casualties to emergency services.
- Once you have identified a safe location, move indoors and upstairs.
- Avoid standing near glass windows as they may shatter into lethal fragments in the event of further explosions.
- Get in touch with your office to find out the latest on the situation. Contact International SOS for immediate advice.
- Get your support element to tune in to the latest news and brief you on what is happening on site.
- Move from your secure location only when the situation has been stabilised and/or when allowed by a third party (police) to do so. The International SOS security specialist may be able to assist with this.

ABDUCTION / KIDNAPPING

- Your ability to think straight/logically and stay calm can be essential for your survival (especially if children you are responsible are also involved).
- Stay calm, do not make any sudden moves and follow instructions.
 - The first 48 hours are the most challenging as you will be disoriented and in forced idleness.
- If you are part of a group, blend in with the others and avoid eye contact with the kidnappers (You will have to try to control students also).
- Staying alert and keeping your mind active will make you more positive and ensure that you are working towards getting home.
- Do not lie to captors, but equally do not readily give out information that they can exploit to gain a further advantage on you.

Tip:

You may be caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, despite good preparation and taking the appropriate precautions. If you think logically and react quickly, you stand a good chance of getting out of any difficult situation. Control Risks is the world's leading provider of Kidnap and Ransom Response Services. Use your wallet car or membership contact number to ask us for advice when you can.

Annex A

Country Guides

Note: These country guides provide the latest security and safety advice available in Aug 2010 – they do have some considerable shelf life; however, it is recommended that you always back these up with a call to International SOS for every school tour or trip to get the most recent advice. This call will also allow the security specialist to provide the required tailored advice for each and every trip.

By doing this you as the teacher will be providing a better “Duty of Care” for the students under your care. The information below is only a start point – the tailored advice is another step to better security and safety.

Brunei

TRAVEL RISK

There are no known security threats that would significantly affect business and tourist travel in the country. Crime against foreigners is unusual and the incidence of violent crime is low. Traffic accidents are a common cause of death and injury.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Take basic precautions to mitigate the risk of petty and street crime.
- Driving standards are poor and the rate of road traffic accidents are high; maintain low speeds and drive defensively.

TERRORISM

Unlike its neighbours, Brunei has not been affected by radical Islamist extremism. The population is monitored extensively by state agencies, as are civil society groups. Brunei’s security services enjoy strong co-operation with their regional and global counterparts in the area of counter-terrorism. However, there remains a low but credible risk of terrorist attacks, given the presence of attractive targets in the Sultanate.

CRIME

The crime rate in Brunei is very low and violent crime is almost non-existent. Although foreigners are not directly at risk, commonsense precautions should be taken against the risk of petty crime.

SOCIAL UNREST

Despite being a multi-ethnic country, there is minimal religious or communal tension and the government has been very careful to maintain harmony among ethnic groups. Ethnic Malays account for around two-thirds of the population. The next largest group is ethnic Chinese, who dominate the business community. Generous government subsidies keep standards of living high and the regime has avoided downsizing the large civil service – which is mostly staffed by Malays - because of fears it would stoke opposition. Nevertheless, an economic downturn has led to an increased level of dissatisfaction with the ruling regime.

CONFLICT

A seabed boundary dispute with Malaysia has suspended oil exploration in the disputed region for the last four years. There have been discussions and negotiations on the maritime boundary and a resolution is pending. The dispute erupted in 2003, when Malaysia and Brunei awarded production-sharing contracts to four overlapping deepwater exploration blocks in the South China Sea after a 440 million-barrel discovery in 2002.

In 1984, Brunei established an exclusive economic zone covering Louisa Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands, but it has not made a public territorial claim. Brunei is acknowledged as a claimant to the disputed island group and participates in negotiations aimed at the peaceful resolution to the dispute. Neither this nor the boundary issue with Malaysia is likely to lead to military conflict in the foreseeable future.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Brunei is ruled by decree by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah. He is an autocratic but popular leader and the political system is stable. The population enjoys a high standard of living, but the oil reserves that finance a generous system of subsidies are finite and at some point the state will need to reduce them. Although the growing middle class are generally quiescent, there have been calls for the government to become more accountable and such pressure is likely to increase in future.

RULE OF LAW

The judicial system consists of five court levels, with final recourse in civil cases available through the Privy Council in London. All higher court judges are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Sultan. Secular laws based on English common law provide citizens with a fair and efficient judicial process.

Sharia law supersedes secular ordinances for Muslims in areas including divorce, inheritance and some sexual crimes. In certain limited circumstances, Sharia law may also apply to non-Muslims, including visitors. Alcohol is not sold anywhere in the country and consuming alcohol in public is prohibited. There are severe penalties for all drug offences in Brunei including, in some cases, the death penalty.

Police officers have broad powers to make arrests without warrants. Volunteer workers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are strictly monitored by the government. Police officers usually speak English and will attempt to assist in the case of robbery or theft. However, they are often slow and inefficient.

CORRUPTION

There are low levels of corruption in Brunei. While there are occasional reports of petty bribe taking by traffic police, the police force and the Internal Security Department are free from major corruption.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Typhoons and earthquakes are not uncommon. Floods and mudslides occur in the wet seasons from September to January and April to July.

BUSINESSWOMEN

Although Brunei is very much a patriarchal society, Muslim women enjoy much more freedom than in many Middle Eastern societies. Many women are well-educated and employed in the workforce, although inequalities still exist in government positions. Muslims in Brunei dress conservatively and many women wear a head scarf in public and at government offices. Non-Muslim women are not required to wear a head scarf.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Brunei International Airport (BWN) is situated approximately seven miles (11km) south of central Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei's capital. Airport facilities include a bank, bureaux de change, car hire, duty-free shops, post office, restaurants and shops. Royal Brunei Airlines, the national carrier, connects Brunei to several international destinations.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website for a list of airlines banned within the EU](#) and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

Regular buses operate between Kuala Belait and Miri in Sarawak (Malaysia); however, travellers need to change buses at the Sungei Tujoh border checkpoint.

By sea

Boats ferry travellers from Sarawak and Sabah (Malaysia) and Singapore to the Serasa Ferry Terminal at Muara in Brunei.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Most foreign visitors must obtain visas before or upon arrival. A single-entry visa, which is valid for three months, costs B\$20 (US\$14) including a transit pass fee of B\$5 (US\$3.50), while a multiple-entry visa costs B\$30-50 (US\$21-35) and remains valid for three to 12 months. Transit visas are valid for up to 72 hours. Nationals of some countries are exempt from visas for particular periods of time, for more information; further information is available on the immigration department's [website](#). Australian nationals can obtain visas at Brunei International Airport (BWN) for stays of up to 30 days; obtaining a visa in advance is necessary for a longer stay. Visitors on diplomatic and official visits and ordinary passport holders require a visa if travelling on official business. Israeli nationals may be denied entry into Brunei.

DEPARTURE TAX

A departure tax of BND12 is payable on check in.

Cambodia

TRAVEL RISK

Crime targeting foreigners has increased significantly. The attacks, often accompanied by threats of violence, are increasingly bold. Tourists, business visitors and expatriates have been affected. There is little risk of crime during the day, but personnel should exercise caution at night. Banditry and landmines render travel in the north-west a higher risk.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Avoid non-essential travel to the north-west due to risks posed by banditry and landmines. Personnel on essential business in this region should seek itinerary-specific advice prior to travel.
- Take sensible basic precautions to mitigate the risk of petty and street crime.
- Armed robbery is not uncommon; in the event of being accosted, assume that your assailant may be armed and do nothing to resist or antagonise them.
- There is a risk of terrorist attack by Islamist extremists in Cambodia. Potential targets include government and military personnel or facilities and Western embassies. Report suspicious behaviour or packages to the authorities.
- Taxis are suitable for business travellers, it is preferable to obtain a vehicle through your hotel or host office. If hiring a taxi, ensure that you have sole use of the vehicle; drivers routinely pick up multiple passengers.
- Travel by rail is not suitable for business travellers.
- Air travel is preferable to travel by road. Road conditions and driving standards are poor and highway robbery a problem in some areas; seek expert advice prior to overland travel in rural areas, which should only be undertaken in daylight.
- Unexploded ordnance (military supplies) are a hazard in rural areas. Do not leave sealed roads or pavements (sidewalks), avoid abandoned buildings, and be vigilant for tape, signs or symbols indicating areas of danger.
- Avoid demonstrations, protests and rallies due to a credible risk of violence. Do not stop to watch or photograph them.

- Violent civil unrest poses an occasional incidental risk to travellers. In the event of unrest, where possible to do so safely, return to your accommodation immediately and stay there until the situation stabilises.
- Treat members of the security forces you encounter with patience and respect. In the event of an emergency or serious criminal incident, contact your embassy for support.
- The above advice is not exhaustive; seek itinerary- and profile-specific advice prior to travel in Cambodia.

CRIME

The crime rate is rising, particularly in Phnom Penh and the beach resort of Sihanoukville. Personnel in urban areas are most likely to be the victims of petty crime; bag-snatching is notably common. However, violent crime is becoming more of a problem; there were a number of attacks on foreign nationals in 2008 and 2009. Firearms are readily available and violence during a street robbery is relatively common. If approached by criminals, visitors are advised to follow all demands rather than try to resist.

Banditry and extortion, some involving ill-disciplined military and police personnel, continue in some rural areas. In general, there is widespread distrust of the police, and criminal gangs aligned with government figures act with impunity.

SOCIAL UNREST

Political violence has occurred in the past, but the threat appears to have reduced in recent years. Public gatherings or demonstrations are likely to be held close to political party offices, the National Assembly building and military buildings or compounds.

Anti-Thai protests occurred most recently in July-August 2008 in response to a dispute that centred on the Preah Vihear temple complex, which is regarded as being in Cambodia, but claimed by Thailand. This is a source of long-term tension, and one that flares up sporadically. In January 2003 the Thai embassy in Phnom Penh and offices of Thai businesses were attacked after a controversial statement by a Thai actress. The actress enraged Cambodians when she said that she would only perform in Cambodia if it returned the Angkor Wat temple to Thailand. No Thai citizens were harmed during the riots and foreigners were not targeted, but the incident served to highlight latent tensions, which are often manipulated by the respective countries' politicians for their own gain.

Labour unrest is a significant problem and unusually related to the key garment sector. The sector is heavily unionised and wages and working conditions are usually the catalyst for walk-outs and protests. Demonstrations are usually handled in a heavy-hand manner, and should be avoided.

TERRORISM

Terrorism as a corollary of political rivalry is a problem, but one that is less of concern in the current climate where power is skewed towards one party, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), and the opposition is either working with it or is relatively weak. Typically,

during periods of tension, political party offices are bombed and key individuals intimidated, and in some cases, murdered.

Fears that Cambodia could become a hub for regional Islamist extremist group, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), have so far been unrealised. The country's weak jurisdiction and police capacity issues compound this concern, but there is no evidence that JI or other Islamist extremists have planned attacks on Cambodia. That said, JI members have been arrested in the country, raising fears that at some point, such groups will try targeting sections of the Muslim Cham community.

In November 2006, six people were arrested on allegations that they were planning to bomb the capital during the annual Water Festival. Unattributed bomb attacks in July 2007 raised the spectre of further problems, which have so far failed to materialise. Three small devices were placed at the Cambodia/Vietnamese Friendship Monument in the capital, one of which detonated.

A couple of US-based diaspora groups, the most notable being the Cambodian Freedom Fighters (CFF), have previously attacked government targets. Latterly, the government has won the co-operation of the US administration, allowing court action to be more effectively pursued against these elements through the US legal system.

CONFLICT

Cambodia has worked hard to emerge from the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge regime. The mass genocide that accompanied this period continues to haunt many of its citizens. They now pin their hopes on some form of redress through the war crimes tribunal, which began to register cases against a number of former senior Khmer leaders in 2008.

Racial violence witnessed during the 1990s has tailed off. In 1993, widespread racial violence led to several hundred ethnic Vietnamese fleeing the country. In 1997, the conflict between government forces and the Khmer Rouge rendered a sizeable fraction of the rural population homeless. Some of these refugees have returned to Cambodia, but continue to face considerable discrimination. Cambodia's record of human rights violations continues to be marred by incidents of abuse, extrajudicial killings and the use of excessive force by the military.

A latent risk from years of conflict remains in the form of landmines. Cambodia is still one of the most heavily land-mined countries in the world and risk of unexploded devices is high in rural areas, especially in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Pursat, Siem Reap and Kampong Thom provinces.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Political infighting, both within parties and between them – often using extreme violence – is a chronic feature of Cambodian politics, but one that has tempered in recent times. A degree of stability is provided by the fact that Prime Minister Hun Sen's domination of this process is almost absolute. As such, the government is unlikely to be removed from power in the foreseeable future, though Hun Sen and his Cambodian People's Party (CPP) sporadically face accusations of intimidating their political opponents.

Hun Sen's control of the military and the bureaucracy also gives him extensive powers of patronage and co-optation at lower levels that keep broader social unrest under control, or at least ensure that most protest is deflected away from the regime. Nevertheless, Hun Sen's consolidation of power is such that his sudden death would have the potential to precipitate violent competition for his mantle.

In October 2004, Cambodia's throne council selected King Norodom Sihamoni to succeed King Norodom Sihanouk, who abdicated due to prolonged illness. The king is the head of state but has no executive powers. Cambodia's royal family is revered, but its power is largely symbolic and this transfer of power had no significant impact on the political situation. That said, the current king is less well regarded than his father, and from the outset announced that he would pursue a symbolic role rather than get involved in everyday politics as Sihanouk did.

The country continues to witness violation of civil liberties and political rights, as well as the use of violence against opposition elements. Inter-party relations are strained with both the CPP and royalist Funcinpec remaining internally divided.

RULE OF LAW

In theory, the government has three branches, legislative, executive and judicial. However, the legislature remains weak and is dominated by the CPP. The legal system consists of lower courts, an appeals court and a Supreme Court, but is structurally weak and subject to military and political manipulation. The justice system is further weakened by sub-standard police procedures. Judges are appointed by the CPP and verdicts are frequently biased in favour of the government.

Although the Khmer Rouge and the government agreed to cease hostilities in 1998, there has been slow progress towards reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators of past injustices. Several Khmer Rouge leaders are yet to be tried and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia has raised concerns about the system's inability to provide elementary justice, especially in the cases that involve political interests.

CORRUPTION

Corruption permeates all aspects of society and is especially rampant in government offices and within the police. Provincial corruption and lawlessness remain severe problems, compounded by the fact that communications and infrastructure are extremely underdeveloped and smuggling is widespread.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Flash floods resulting from heavy rains affect the provinces along the Mekong river and the southern region. The rainy season runs from May to November and there is often seasonal flooding in Phnom Penh and other parts of Cambodia between July and August.

BUSINESSWOMEN

The country provides a generally safe, if not entirely comfortable, environment for foreign female business executives. It is unusual for women to travel alone, and women on business generally travel in groups. Overt aggressive harassment is rare, though many Cambodian men are steeped in Western media images and view Western women as amoral and as such, may be tempted to approach them. There have been few reports of any attacks, but it is wise to dress modestly and to remain in the company of others, especially at night or in rural areas. Standard precautions will further reduce any threats to an individual's security. Businesswomen should ensure that room numbers remain confidential. This includes not publicly displaying the room key tag and emphasising that the room number should not be given to any inquirers. If possible they should insist on a room with a key-chain, deadlock and spy-hole.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

International airline connections are poor, with direct flights largely limited to regional countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Vietnam. Most visitors fly from Bangkok (Thailand), which has the most flights (and usually the cheapest). Airlines that fly to the country include Silk Air, Malaysian Airlines, Thai International, Vietnam Airlines and Cathay Pacific.

Siem Reap Airways operates services to and from Thailand, China and Laos, in addition to the route between the capital and Siem Reap; however, the airline in November 2008 was blacklisted by the EU for failing to comply with domestic and international safety regulations; personnel are advised not to fly with this carrier which has suspended all flights since 1 December 2008.

It can be difficult to purchase tickets during the Khmer New Year (mid-April) and the Chinese/Vietnamese New Year (January-February). It is also important to reconfirm all international flights out of the country because reservations are not always honoured.

Major international airports

Phnom Penh International Airport and Siem Reap International Airport are the only recommended points of air entry into Cambodia. The former, while modern and efficient, is prone to flooding during the monsoon season (May-October), which can disrupt bookings and affect computers. Afternoon flights are best avoided in the late wet season (July-October), when there is an increased risk of storms and strong winds.

Airport security

Phnom Penh airport in 2003 introduced a new computerised immigration system, including passport-scanning, to improve levels of security. While scrutiny of hand and hold baggage has improved, it remains below generally accepted international standards.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Tourist and business visas are available on arrival for travellers arriving by air. The processing of entry visas is generally efficient, though they can be arranged before travel to avoid queuing. Travellers must fill in a form and produce two photographs. One-month tourist visas, which cost around 84,000 riels, can only be extended for one more month. Business visas, which cost approximately 106,000 riels, can be extended indefinitely. Daily fines are charged for overstaying a visa's duration. A letter of introduction can sometimes help if there are problems at the visa or immigration desks. However, passengers should wait to be asked before showing any additional papers to immigration officials.

Electronic tourist visas valid for up to three months from the issuance date are available via the foreign affairs ministry [website](#). Electronic visas are valid only for entry to Cambodia by air. Travellers entering the country at other points need to obtain a visa in advance.

Visitors from Thailand can obtain visas at most border crossings including Poipet, Koh Kong, O Smach, Anlong Veng, Phsar Prom Pailin and Daung Lem. Similarly, travellers from Vietnam can get visas from the three well-established border crossings at Bavet, Kaam Samnor and Phnom Den. The five other crossings at Trapeang Phlong, Prek Chak, O Yadaw and Trapeang Srer may issue visas; travellers are advised to check in advance. Visas for entry from Vietnam can be obtained from the Dom Krolor checkpoint.

Entry/Exit requirements

A valid passport with at least three months' validity is required.

Procedures

Travellers must complete a customs declaration form. Although customs procedures tend to be relaxed, it is wise to avoid bringing in expensive electrical goods (such as cameras or computer equipment) in their original packing. Departure formalities are straightforward, but it is advisable to check in 90 minutes before an international flight is scheduled to leave.

All luggage will be X-rayed on departure. It is illegal to take antiques out of the country without the correct certification. The latter can be obtained from the vendor when purchasing antiques.

DEPARTURE TAX

A departure tax of \$25 is payable at the airport when leaving the country. In July 2008, Societe Concessionnaire de l'Aeroport (SCA), the operator of the country's two main airports – Phnom Penh and Siem Reap – agreed to include the tax in the cost of the airfare following complaints from travel agents. Departure tax for domestic flights is \$6, but \$13 at Phnom Penh's airport.

China

TRAVEL RISK

Foreign business travellers face few hazards outside remote and border areas (notably near the borders with Indo-China (in the far south-west), the Russian far-east (north-east) and Central Asia (north-west)). The risk of petty and more serious crime also tends to be higher in the cities of Guangdong province – especially the Guangzhou-Dongguan-Shenzhen corridor. Violent crime against foreigners is rare, but not unheard of. Ethnic Chinese visitors, regardless of nationality, face a heightened risk of falling victim to violent crime. Petty crime, particularly in crowded areas such as markets and train stations, is the main risk. There is little risk from terrorism. Driving standards are generally extremely poor and road accidents and the danger posed to pedestrians on city streets constitute a far greater risk to travellers than violent crime.

Hong Kong

Travellers must take precautions against petty crime and scams in the main business, shopping and entertainment districts of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Occasional muggings have also been reported in the territory's country parks and rural areas. Hong Kong has no indigenous terrorist groups and faces a low risk of terrorism. Protests have become a fairly common feature of political life. They can disrupt traffic, but to date have been almost entirely peaceful.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Be aware that special permits are required for entry into and travel within Tibet Autonomous Region. Personnel should also be aware that the authorities may on occasion restrict travel to or within regions of China with little or no notice during periods of heightened political tension. Contact your embassy prior to travel for up-to-date information on travel permit requirements.
- Ensure that official documentation is in order at all times and comply with all registration requirements.
- Carry original identification at all times. Consider carrying a card stating your particulars in Mandarin.
- Take basic security precautions against the risk of petty and street crime.
- Avoid demonstrations, protests and rallies to mitigate the risk of becoming involved in incidental violence or clashes with the security forces. In the event of unrest, where possible to do so safely, return to your accommodation and remain there until the situation stabilises.
- Avoid sensitive topics of discussion, including human rights, democratisation, Tibet, Taiwan, minority rights and religious freedom.
- Be aware that items considered to be detrimental to China's economy, culture, political affairs or morality will be confiscated by officials. These may include undeveloped films, recorded material, publications and computers. Personnel should also be aware that carrying politically sensitive material or engaging in

- political activism relating to Tibet may result in temporary detainment and deportation.
- Be aware that anti-foreigner sentiment is possible during periods of heightened national sentiment, for example, during diplomatic and other international disputes.
 - The risk of terrorist attacks in major cities is credible but low; Uighur militants occasionally carry out attacks within Xinjiang province. Be aware that small-scale bombings related to business or personnel disputes are not unusual, though these are very unlikely to directly target foreigners. Report any suspicious behaviour and packages to the authorities.
 - Do not self-drive unless very familiar with local conditions; driving standards are poor.
 - Be aware that buses and other forms of public transport can attract pickpockets; maintain vigilance over your personnel possessions.
 - Be aware of the performance record of Chinese domestic airlines and consult travel agents regarding their suitability while making travel plans.
 - Be aware that information security and leaks of sensitive commercial data are issues in China; exercise stringent information security protocols.

CRIME

The crime rate is generally higher in the economically prosperous and densely populated south-east coastal provinces. Petty crime, especially theft, is the main problem that foreign personnel will encounter. The growing wealth in the big cities has attracted a large number of migrants from the countryside some of whom try to make a living through theft and deception. Most areas of the big cities are safe for foreigners by day and by night, and security at major hotels is adequate. Violent robbery, particularly of foreigners, is rare, but personnel should make sure that they do not flaunt valuables. Items such as laptop computers and gold watches are desirable on the black market and will attract thieves.

Ethnic Chinese are more likely to become targets of violent crime than Caucasians or Japanese nationals, particularly if they have been involved in business disputes with Chinese partners. Even so, foreign business personnel should not risk attracting criminals with overt displays of wealth. Criminals are increasingly targeting high-income local individuals, making senior executives in foreign-invested enterprises a prime target for robbery, car crime and even kidnap.

Security conditions in south China, particularly Guangdong province, are generally worse than elsewhere. Police presence is also poor in areas bordering Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Pakistan, Siberia and Vietnam. There is also a risk of armed bandit attacks in remote parts of China, such as the Gansu/Sichuan border. In Yunnan, drug smuggling and related crimes have recently increased. However, business travel to nearly all parts of China remains relatively safe provided that executives take reasonable precautions.

KIDNAPPING

There has been an increase in kidnaps and the overwhelming majority of victims are locals and overseas Chinese from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Kidnap-for-ransom seldom

involves violence when a ransom is paid, but several violent incidents have occurred. Short-term detentions of foreign business personnel have also been reported. These often involve ethnic Chinese who are involved in dubious business practices. Other foreigners are very rarely targeted, but are not immune to such risks.

Kidnapping is also used to resolve business disputes between the Chinese (often linked to criminal gangs) if the 'wronged' party is hesitant to use the law for any reason. Kidnappers demand that outstanding debts are paid as a ransom. South China, particularly the Guangzhou-Dongguan-Shenzhen corridor in Guangdong province, is the worst-affected region.

SOCIAL UNREST

While demonstrations are illegal in China, public unrest still occurs. It is estimated that millions of residents participate in near-daily demonstrations, most of which do not receive media attention. In recent years, social unrest has become more frequent. Protests mainly relate to land disputes, forced rehousing and labour issues (unpaid salaries and poor working conditions) and local officials' alleged disinterest in dealing with them. In June 2009, more than 200 people were injured during a protest over the death of a man at a state-owned hotel in the central city of Shishou (Hubei province); demonstrators reportedly clashed with the police and erected roadblocks across the city. The government tends to increase security in the run up to sensitive anniversaries, like the commemoration of the Tiananmen Square Massacre (4 June) and the Tibetan uprising (10 March). While the disturbances very rarely threaten foreigners, personnel should avoid protests, which can sometimes be dealt with by the security forces in a heavy-handed manner.

The suppression of ethnic minorities occurs mainly in Tibet and Xinjiang. Pro-Tibetan independence riots erupted in March 2008 in Tibet, as well as Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces. Ethnic Han Chinese businesses in the Tibetan capital Lhasa were attacked during the disturbances, which were forcefully contained by the government. Tibet was temporarily closed to foreigners on that occasion; and again in February 2009 in anticipation of possible violence ahead of the 50th anniversary of the uprising. One monk was reportedly shot dead by the police in Abe prefecture of Sichuan, while several others were detained.

There have been broader occasional tensions between the Han majority and ethnic minorities such as Hui Muslims. In July 2009, at least 150 people were killed and over 1000 others injured in riots following clashes between the ethnic Han Chinese and Uighurs in Urumqi, the capital of the north-western Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The alleged abuse of a Han Chinese woman by Uighurs in Shaoguan (Guangdong province), and violent demonstrations the following day during which two Uighurs were killed and 120 others injured, may have been a trigger for the unrest. While the ethnic tensions reflect the growing income disparity between the wealthier Han and poorer ethnic minorities, they do not pose a threat to China's overall security.

Nationalist demonstrations are not uncommon. At the height of the pro-Tibetan independence situation in 2008, there were protests outside outlets of French retailer Carrefour in major cities such as Beijing and Chongqing, following allegations that the company supports the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan independence movement. Western

media outlets were also accused of harbouring an anti-China bias. Thousands of people protested, sometimes violently, in 2005 against Japanese interests after the Japanese government approved textbooks that downplayed atrocities committed against the Chinese during the Second World War.

TERRORISM

Militants within the Turkic-speaking, Muslim Uighur population of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the country's far west are engaged in a long-running insurgency against ethnic Han rule that has included attacks on the military and local officials. Groups, including the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Eastern Turkestan Liberation Organisation (ETLO), the World Uighur Youth Congress (WUYC) and the East Turkestan Information Centre (ETIC) have fluid and overlapping memberships and structures and a limited operational capacity. They almost exclusively attack individuals or symbols representing Chinese rule in XUAR; allegations of involvement in incidents outside of the far west are unsubstantiated.

Past attacks have not targeted high-profile foreign personnel or assets. There is some evidence of contact between Uighur militants and al-Qaida operatives in training camps in central Asia, but this has not resulted in operational collaboration or Uighur militants' adoption of an anti-Western agenda. No attacks occurred in cities hosting events during the August 2008 Beijing Olympics Games, though 45 Uighur militants were arrested in Xinjiang in January 2008 for allegedly planning terrorist attacks against hotels and government buildings, and planning to kidnap high-profile individuals.

CONFLICT

China is involved in a territorial dispute with six other countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Malaysia, over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, which are thought to sit above substantial oil fields. China is also party to the dispute over the Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku in Japanese) in the East China Sea, which are also claimed by Taiwan and Japan.

Memories of the Japanese invasion and occupation of China from 1937 to 1945 and the occupiers' treatment of the Chinese still sour bilateral relations; anti-Japanese protests broke out in 2005 following the publication of a Japanese textbook that China claimed contained incorrect information on Japan's Second World War record.

Relations between China and Taiwan have been tense since the end of China's civil war and the establishment of a rival regime in Taiwan in 1949. China views Taiwan as a breakaway province that should be reunited with the mainland, by force if necessary. Despite the thawing of relations between the two following the election in March 2008 of President Ma Ying-jeou and his Kuomintang (KMT), there seems no prospect of a permanent settlement on Taiwan's status for many years to come and it will thus remain a potential, though unlikely, flashpoint.

POLITICAL SITUATION

China is officially a communist state and has been ruled since 1949 by the Communist Party of China (CCP), the world's largest political party with more than 70m members.

The CCP, although ostensibly one of several political parties, has a tight grip on power and controls every state body, with which party organisations are closely intertwined. China's size necessitates the decentralisation of power to provinces and municipalities where strong party organisations also exist. Criticism of the CCP, its leaders and the system of government is not tolerated, resulting in the blocking of some internet sites and surveillance of email communications as well as a sizeable population of political prisoners. A major economic reform programme initiated in the 1970s has produced dynamic, double-digit GDP growth, but exacerbated social tensions, which serve to deter the CCP leadership from all but very gradual political liberalisation.

RULE OF LAW

Political stability and social control in China are predicated on the supremacy of the CCP and the overarching presence of the communist system rather than the preeminence of the rule of law, respect for state institutions and an independent judiciary. Recognition of the need for a stronger framework to support an increasingly sophisticated corporate environment has resulted in the strengthening of the judicial system, but this remains subject to the vagaries of political and commercial influence. The concepts of human rights and freedom of expression are counterbalanced by a strong traditional emphasis on duty to the nation. China has a vast military establishment and grassroots party organisation that monitor and enforce adherence to government policy and preclude often frequent social unrest from escalating to destabilising proportions. Foreigners, particularly human rights activists and journalists, who aggressively broach the sensitive topics of political pluralism, Tibet, Taiwan and human rights issues, are typically hastily expelled from the country.

The police deal effectively with most routine problems and generally treat foreigners courteously. For more serious problems, travellers should also alert their embassy and inform the police that they have done so. Embassies can exert pressure at high levels of the police force to ensure that cases are followed up properly.

CORRUPTION

Expatriates, particularly those working for multinational corporations (MNCs), rarely encounter forthright demands for bribes. However, officials or private businesses may hint to management to provide inducements to boost their chances, for example, of winning a tender. Local personnel are more likely to be at the receiving end of undisguised demands for such payments.

NATURAL DISASTERS

China is prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and typhoons. In May 2008, an earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale struck Sichuan province, killing more than 63,000 people and displacing millions. More than 2,000 aftershocks were recorded in less than a month following the initial tremor, which caused significant damage to the region's infrastructure.

Annual flooding is common in central, west and south China, particularly in the Yangtze River basin. During the monsoon season from April to October, flooding and rainstorms can disrupt the provision of basic services in affected areas. The typhoon season, which

typically lasts between May and December, affects areas along the southern and eastern coasts. China is the country most frequently affected by typhoons – it has an average of seven typhoons a year.

Mudslides and landslides caused by heavy rains are also common in mountainous areas and have claimed many lives. The Khunjerab pass (on the border with Pakistan-administered Kashmir) of the Karakoram Highway connecting China to Pakistan can be hazardous due to unpredictable rock slides, which can cause sizeable boulders to fall on narrow roads at any time. Avalanches also are possible during winter.

WOMEN

Foreign female personnel face few gender-related problems in China. The Chinese are accustomed to businesswomen and no special rules apply. Sensible precautions, such as not walking alone after dark, should be observed.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

The main international airports are in the capital Beijing, Shanghai municipality and Guangzhou (Guangdong province). Which one business travellers use depends partly on where they travel from. Shanghai has two international airports – Pudong Airport (PVG) and Hongqiao Airport (SHA). Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) was expanded to cope with additional passenger demand ahead of the Olympic Games in 2008. The construction of a second airport serving Beijing is scheduled to begin in 2010. Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (CAN) is the base of China Southern Airlines and is the second-busiest airport in the country. The airport is also referred to as New Baiyun to distinguish it from its predecessor; however, this is not officially part of its name. Security at international airports is low-profile, but adequate. Air China is the national flag carrier and main overseas carrier.

Flight services experience considerable disruption due to heavy fog and snow in the winter months (November to March). Flights can also be overbooked during national holiday periods, including the Spring Festival and the Chinese New Year (late January-early February), International Labour Day (first week of May) and National Day (first week of October); reservations should be made well in advance for travel during holiday periods.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the website of the European Commission for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the website of the US Federal Aviation Administration for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

Most business visitors arrive by air, though the rail link from Hong Kong special administrative region is also a convenient access point for visits to southern China.

HONG KONG

By air

Chek Lap Kok Airport (HKG) on Lantau island in Hong Kong is one of the major air hubs of the world. There are no particular security risks at HKG. A specialised police unit is permanently stationed at the airport and on constant patrol.

By land

Travellers to Guangdong province can take the express train from Kowloon (Hong Kong) to Guangzhou, which reaches its destination in less than two hours. The rail service is being upgraded to provide an alternative to air travel for business travel between Hong Kong and cities on the eastern Chinese coast.

By sea

Catamarans and hovercraft link Hong Kong to Macau special administrative region and Chinese cities in the Pearl River delta, including Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Visas are not required for nationals of Singapore, Brunei, Mongolia and Japan for visits of up to 15 days; nationals of all other countries require a visa. A visa application can be delivered by somebody on your behalf; postal applications are not acceptable. Business travellers without an invitation from a host organisation should enter on a tourist visa. Visa validity should be checked because fines can be levied for overstaying. Visitors who are transiting China en route to a third country are exempt from visa requirements, provided that they stay in the transit area of the airport for no more than 24 hours.

Multiple- and single-entry visas are both available, as are tourist group visas and individual visas; prices and processing times vary according to the country in which you lodged the application. A tourist visa (or L visa) is valid for 90 days or 180 days from the date of issue, which means the holder must enter the country within this period or the visa will expire. Normally the duration of stay for an L visa is 30 days. Extending visas usually presents few problems. Visa extensions are handled by the foreign affairs section of the local Public Security Bureau (PSB). Visas can be extended for one month, but obtaining a further extension is difficult. The Beijing visa office for foreigners is open from Monday to Saturday at 08.30-11.30 and 14.00-17.30 (local time).

Separate visas are required for visits to Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions, depending on which passport you hold and your planned duration of stay (for more information contact local Chinese diplomatic representation). Visitors on a return trip to Hong Kong from the mainland should ensure that they have a double- or multiple-entry visa to gain re-entry to the mainland. Foreign visitors intending to travel to Tibet autonomous region must apply for visas in advance and must obtain an additional permit from the PSB. In general, the authorities try to prevent individual travellers from going to

Tibet because the authorities are suspicious of possible contacts between Tibetans and foreigners, who they believe might be trying to further the Tibetan cause.

Personnel of many nationalities seeking to cross overland from Hong Kong to Shenzhen have the option of obtaining a Shenzhen SEZ visa-on-arrival at the Lo Wu (Luohu) crossing; this visa is not currently available at the Lok Ma Chau checkpoint and no such visa exists for those taking the ferry to Guangzhou from Hong Kong. The special Shenzhen visa is only valid for five days and only allows the traveller to visit the SEZ zone, which comprises the city's four central districts of Nanshan, Futian, Luohu and Yantian, aligned in that order from west to east along the city's frontier with Hong Kong. If caught outside these areas, personnel may face immediate deportation or temporary detention. US nationals are not eligible for this type of visa, and rules governing the eligibility of British passport holders are subject to frequent changes. Personnel are advised that obtaining a proper China visa is preferable for almost all visits.

Entry/Exit requirements

The national currency, the renminbi, can be taken in and out of the country, but only up to the value of 6,000 yuan. There are no restrictions on foreign currency, except that you should declare any cash that exceeds \$5,000 (or its equivalent in another currency). Other requirements tend to change at short notice and should be checked before departure.

Procedures

Foreign visitors do not need to fill in a customs declaration form listing valuables, but must fill in arrival and departure documents when entering and leaving the country, as well as a health declaration form. Customs and immigration procedures at international airports are not rigorous; however, political events can suddenly make visas more difficult to obtain or renew.

HONG KONG

Visas

Most visitors do not require a visa for visits of less than one month. British passport holders are permitted to stay visa-free for six months; citizens of most western European nations, Canada and the US are permitted to stay for three months; and visitors from Mexico, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan and South Africa for one month. Visas are still required for personnel from eastern European countries. Foreign business personnel in Hong Kong can obtain a visa for China within a day.

Visas for Hong Kong are issued through Chinese embassies and consulates. For visa extensions, contact the Immigration Department, Second Floor, Wanchai Tower Two, Seven Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong, China (Tel: +852 2824 6111; Fax: +852 2877 7711).

Entry/Exit requirements

There is no limit on the amount of Hong Kong dollars that you can take into or out of the country.

Procedures

Immigration is reasonably quick. Customs is divided into 'red' and 'green', respectively for those with and without dutiable items to declare. Baggage generally arrives promptly on the carousels. There are money-changing facilities on the 'air side' concourse.

DEPARTURE TAX

Airport tax is included in the price of the ticket.

Europe

Note: it is impossible to write travel advice that would cover all of the countries of Europe; it is recommended that this is covered by calling International SOS and requesting the information which would be tailored to your groups itinerary.

India

TRAVEL RISK

The security environment varies considerably across the country. However, personnel remain able to travel freely in most parts of India. While a series of coordinated terrorist attacks in the city of Mumbai in November 2008 caused widespread assistance, personnel remain able to travel freely in most parts of India. Travel risks are higher in Jammu and Kashmir, Asom (Assam), Manipur, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Bihar and Nagaland, where separatist groups and guerrillas operate. The risk from terrorism to business travellers and expatriates in India has been largely incidental. However, these incidents are no longer restricted to Jammu and Kashmir and the north-eastern states, and the threat has extended to the country's major urban centres; There continues to be a steady flow of alleged terror threats throughout India. However, these alerts have mostly turned out to be false alarms or hoaxes. Indian media outlets tend to be alarmist and regularly report rumours as fact, which heightens fears of attack. Although difficult to predict, further lower intensity acts of terrorism in India's major metropolitan areas are expected to continue.

Petty crime, such as pick pocketing, is common in crowded cities and tourist areas, but the risk of physical attack is minimal. Kidnaps-for-ransom occur primarily among the local population. There have been a number of cases of political kidnaps of foreigners, notably in Jammu and Kashmir, but rarely in other parts of the country. Gang crimes are also common, though these have tended not to directly affect foreigners. The risk from crime against women, including rape, is prevalent and requires the adoption of extra security precautions. Political rallies and demonstrations in India have the potential to become violent, particularly preceding and following elections. Demonstrations can occur or escalate spontaneously and pose an incidental risk to business personnel.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

Standing Travel Recommendations:

- Normal travel to India can continue.
- In Jammu and Kashmir state avoid all but essential travel to the Kashmir valley region, including the state capital Srinagar, because of the risks posed by frequent violent unrest, which may occur with little or no warning and poses significant incidental risks.
- Travel to the Line of Control (LoC) between Indian- and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir (including the Jammu-Srinagar-Leh road) and to border regions with Pakistan within Jammu and Kashmir should be for essential purposes only.
- Travel to all other areas of Jammu and Kashmir can continue, though travellers should monitor developments during their stay and exercise caution at times of heightened tension. Travel to the Ladakh region should be by air to avoid non-essential travel on the Srinagar-Leh road.
- Exercise caution if travelling in districts along the following international borders, where terrorist and separatist groups operate:
 - West Bengal and Bangladesh;
 - Assam (Assam) and Bhutan;
 - Nagaland and Myanmar;
 - Manipur and Myanmar;
 - Bihar and Nepal.
- Exercise caution if travelling outside eastern districts of West Bengal, or beyond the major cities of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa states; these areas can be affected by violence associated with the Naxalite (Maoist) movement. Foreigners are unlikely to be directly targeted in any unrest, which poses only incidental risks.
- Seek professional security planning prior to travel in Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Nagaland due to risks posed by banditry, militant tribal and separatist activity. Be aware that travel to these areas is periodically restricted by general strike activity or by the authorities. Curfews may be imposed at times of heightened tension and special permission to travel may be required.

Standing Security Advice for Travellers to India:

- Take sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Be aware that confidence tricksters may target foreigners. Be wary of strangers and their motives and firmly decline offers of assistance or services from strangers or casual acquaintances.
- Do not enter into public confrontation with locals; this is likely to draw a crowd that may become aggressive.
- Avoid all demonstrations, rallies and other large public gatherings due to the incidental risk of social unrest and clashes with the security forces.
- Communal violence is relatively common and can spread to areas frequented by foreign travellers, though foreigners are unlikely to be directly targeted. In the event of unrest, where possible to do so safely, return to your accommodation and remain there until the situation has stabilised.

- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by militant separatist, Islamist extremist and communal groups. Potential targets include: public transport; religious sites; busy unsecured areas such as marketplaces; government and military buildings and personnel; and venues where the Indian social elite and Westerners are known to congregate. Small-scale attacks targeting locals are more likely than large-scale attacks, or attacks that directly target foreigners. Personnel should remain alert to their surroundings, and report any suspicious activity or suspect packages to the authorities.
- Where possible, travel longer distances by air. Where air travel is not a viable option, travel by rail is preferable to long car journeys. While terrorist groups occasionally target the rail network, travel by train remains significantly safer than driving given the extremely high rate of fatal road traffic accidents.
- If travelling by rail, use first- and second-class air-conditioned coaches only to ensure comfort, mitigate the risk of opportunistic petty crime, and in the case of female travellers, the risk of harassment.
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is preferable to arrange taxis through your hotel, local office or host company, and to agree a price in advance. Personnel should arrange a car and driver through their hotel or company for all other journeys.
- It is inadvisable to self-drive; driving conditions are chaotic, road quality poor, and the rate of accidents extremely high. Ensure that you are confident in your driver and vehicle. In the event of being involved in a serious road traffic accident, drive on before informing the nearest authorities; drivers who kill or injure persons in an accident risk being attacked.
- Auto-rickshaws are not suitable for business travel; it is preferable to hire a car and driver from a reputable company obtained through your hotel or company.
- Female travellers are advised to wear loose-fitting clothing that covers the chest, shoulders, legs, and arms to the elbow. Women should avoid travel after dark without a trusted male companion.

CRIME

The major cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Pune register a moderate-to-high crime rate. However, petty and opportunistic crime poses the main risk; confidence tricksters will prey on a gullible foreigner or business traveller. Personnel should be wary of over-friendly people who approach and persistently offer to change money or provide other services; such approaches should be firmly declined. There have also been isolated incidents of travellers being drugged or poisoned. Instances of crimes against women, including physical harassment and rapes, have increased, especially in urban areas and tourist destinations across the country.

Robberies in suburban areas typically target isolated or poorly protected residences. Gang crime is common, but foreigners are generally not directly affected. Similarly, instances of murder, often arising from land disputes, are fairly common in rural areas, but do not affect foreign personnel. However, as a general rule, personnel should avoid becoming embroiled in public confrontations with locals; such disputes will quickly attract a crowd and the mood can rapidly turn ugly.

SOCIAL UNREST

Although the democratic environment is able to accommodate most protests, civil disorder can occasionally be provoked and poses a significant threat to the safety of foreign personnel. The police often overreact – using firearms, sometimes as a first resort. Political rallies are frequently witness to such clashes. Foreign visitors are unlikely to be singled out for attack – the exceptions being journalists and photographers, whose presence is often considered provocative – but they can inadvertently be caught up in clashes. If violence spreads throughout a city, personnel should remain in their hotel or a secured location until the unrest subsides. The authorities regularly impose curfews, which should be obeyed at all times. During volatile situations, business travellers and expatriates should ensure that their actions, such as crossing roadblocks, cannot be regarded as provocative.

Tensions between the ethnic groups can degenerate into violence. These may be triggered by religious (Hindu-Muslim), language or caste issues. What was believed to be a Muslim attack on a train carrying Hindu activists in Godhra (Gujarat) in February 2002 prompted Hindu/Muslim clashes that continued intermittently for four months. Estimates of the number of people who were killed ranged from 1,000 to 2,000. Communal unrest can affect any city with religious divisions, though it is more common in cities such as Hyderabad, which have powerful Muslim minorities. Disturbances are most often concentrated in specific areas of a city (often the poorest quarters), but have on occasion spread to city centres. Rivalries between conservative and liberal Sikh sects have often deteriorated into violence with protesters resorting to the blockade of major travel routes; most such incidents have occurred in the state of Punjab, where the majority of the population is Sikh.

In recent years, Hindu nationalist groups have launched sporadic attacks on Christian communities and interests in some areas, accusing them of engaging in proselytisation. About 40 Christians were killed in several days of violence in the Kandhamal district of Orissa in August 2008 after a Hindu leader had been murdered. While foreign nationals are rarely targeted by hardline religious groups, they may face harassment if they are perceived to be proselytising the indigenous communities. In 1999, an Australian missionary and his two sons were killed by Hindu extremists in Orissa.

Social movements in the past 20 years have been vibrant and successful to varying degrees. Many are linked to claims of indigenous people over natural resources and others stem from dissatisfaction with government policies that attempt to change existing imbalances in resource distribution among various ethnic and social groups. Hardline regional groups in states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra frequently organise violent protests and stage targeted attacks to promote local culture and languages, and demand greater benefits for the local population.

TERRORISM

India has long alleged that Pakistan trains and financially supports Kashmiri militant groups. The Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) is the most prominent of these and is suspected of having links with al-Qaida. These groups have developed operational networks and individual cells, and pose a significant risk to India's security. Groups actively operating in India include the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), the

Bangladesh-based Harkat-ul-Jehadi-Islami (HUJI) and the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). The activities of the latter and its suspected offshoots, notably the Indian Mujahideen (IM), have highlighted a growing problem with 'home-grown' Islamist extremism, creating another dimension to India's terrorism problem.

Multiple bomb attacks in the capital Delhi, Jaipur (Rajasthan state), Ahmedabad (Gujarat state) and Bangalore (Karnataka state) in 2008 demonstrated that the risk of terrorism had expanded to a pan-Indian level, with major cities presenting particularly attractive targets. The most spectacular terrorist incident in India's history occurred in November 2008, when attacks were carried out at various locations in Mumbai (Maharashtra state), with militants allegedly specifically targeting US and British nationals and damaging and forcing the closure of two business-class hotels; nearly 200 people were killed, while some 300 others were injured. Sixteen people were killed and more than 50 others injured in a bomb attack at a café in Pune (Maharashtra) in February 2010, which was attributed to religious extremists. There is a probability of further attacks in major cities.

In the north-east, there are several separatist groups, but two stand out — the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), which campaigns for independence for Asom (Assam) state, and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM), which seeks independence for Nagaland state. Assam continues to experience the highest incidence of attacks in the north-east, which usually target public markets, railway stations, gas pipelines and power-transmission facilities. Manipur state is particularly volatile because of public opposition to anti-terror laws, which, activists say, are being abused. Travel to some parts of the north-east that are insurgency affected or close to international borders is restricted and foreign nationals need special permits for entry.

There has been a significant rise in extreme leftist Naxalite rebellion (also known as Maoism) in central and southern India in recent years. In June 2009, the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) was designated a terrorist organisation by the government, a move that marked an effective ban on the group's activities. The movement began in Naxalbari district of West Bengal state and the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh state and has expanded rapidly, forming a 'corridor' running from the northern and north-eastern states, down through Maharashtra and into Andhra Pradesh. The Naxalites generally target state officials, the security forces and infrastructure (mainly rail and communication). They do not generally target foreign travellers or expatriates. Often, the primary risk stems from Naxalite-inspired social mobilisation, particularly when land acquisition displaces members of the local population.

Insurgent groups rarely threaten foreigners, but there are risks associated with travel to states with a high level of insurgent activity, such as Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur, as well as Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar. Many insurgent groups have political affiliations, but are operationally independent. Increasingly, groups within India and across South Asia have begun working together, sometimes with no obvious ideological affiliation. This not only poses more risks, but also makes it more difficult for the authorities to address the problem.

KIDNAPPING

India has one of the highest rates of domestic kidnapping worldwide, but kidnaps-for-ransom occur almost exclusively among the local population. Various criminal gangs and extremist groups operate in different states. Separatist groups are known to conduct kidnapping fairly regularly, especially in the north-eastern states and in Jammu and Kashmir. There have been a few cases of political abductions of foreigners, notably in Jammu and Kashmir, but rarely in other parts of the country.

CONFLICT

Separatism is a primary motivation for many insurgent groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir and those in the north-east, where militants have proliferated in recent times. Civil conflicts involving natural resources, most notably mineral wealth, forests and arable land, have occurred in the eastern and north-eastern states. In these regions, Asom (Assam) and Manipur are the most volatile states.

Left-wing extremists (Naxalites) are active in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa, which have very low human development indicators. The violent movement has spread to affect 40% of the country and activists have been known to conduct symbolic attacks on Western organisations and companies.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir continues to be a major source of discord between India and Pakistan. The region remains divided between the two countries with India in control of approximately two-thirds of the territory.

The first Indo-Pakistani war took place in 1947-48. Following that, the two countries fought two wars in 1965 and 1971, and a limited conflict in Kargil in 1999. Their most recent stand-off came in 2002 after a Pakistani militant attack on India's parliament building in December 2001. The spectre of further possible conflict between what are now two nuclear-armed neighbours has created international pressure for a resolution to the core issues that form the heart of their dispute. Since 2003, a peace process has been under way, but it has reaped few concrete dividends.

Relations with China have improved considerably following a brief war in 1962, though negotiations have been slow on the status of the contentious Line of Actual Control (LAC), which lies near the north-eastern states of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Concerns persist over China's military modernisation, alleged incursions near the LAC and Beijing's continued strategic relationship with Pakistan.

Since 2000, there have been several sporadic clashes between border guards on West Bengal's border with Bangladesh during operations to control illegal immigration into India. However, such incidents have been localised in nature and have not led to an overall deterioration in ties.

POLITICAL SITUATION

India is a federal republic with a parliamentary form of government. The president is the constitutional head, but executive power rests with the council of ministers that is

headed by the prime minister. The parliament is bicameral, comprising the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and the Lok Sabha (lower house). Major parties include the Congress Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Janata Dal and the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). India has a record of regular elections and peaceful transfers of power. Democratic institutions are generally stable, except for the occasional instability of a few state governments.

The ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition is led by Congress and comprises its left-wing and regional allies. Left Front support of a Congress-led coalition government is unlikely to stop liberalisation and privatisation, though it will ensure that reforms proceed at a slower pace because of the requirement for several rounds of consultations.

Division of power between the central and state governments is blurred at times. The varying indicators in economic and social development among states suggest that state governments can have a greater influence on their populations than the federal government. However, the union government still exercises considerable influence on states through several financial resources and its authority to assume control of states during times of emergency (also termed as President's Rule). District and local governments are generally weak, though some states with established *panchayats* (traditional village councils) are known to effectively address local issues.

RULE OF LAW

The primary responsibility for maintaining public order and law enforcement lies with the police. Each state has a police force that maintains order in townships and the rural areas. There are great variations in the implementation of the law across the country, with the police and bureaucracy being widely accused of corruption and politicisation. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh states have particularly poor law and order records.

The inordinate delays in legal cases and a large backlog of unfinished litigations hinder the dispensation of justice, especially in the conflict areas where there are perceptible deficits in law enforcement and violation of civil rights. Violent attacks against members of minority or religious communities have increased in recent years.

CORRUPTION

Corruption exists at all echelons of society and is especially prevalent in government offices. Expatriates and business travellers see only a small percentage of the endemic corruption in the work place, partly because their Indian colleagues tend to take care of such details. However, they are likely to experience corruption when dealing with government officials for the various required permits and extensions. In many tourist areas, there are also common police scams soliciting payment for alleged traffic infringements and related 'misdemeanours'.

The police, judiciary (especially lower courts) and land administration officials are allegedly the most corrupt. However, the level of corruption varies from state to state, for instance Kerala is known to be the least corrupt state and Bihar the most corrupt.

NATURAL DISASTERS

India is vulnerable to natural disasters because it lies in an active seismic zone and has a large coastline. The Asian tsunami in December 2004 caused widespread damage and killed many on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. The east coast is vulnerable to cyclones, especially between April and December, with peaks in May and October. The state of Orissa was struck by a super-cyclone in 1999, which killed approximately 10,000 people and displaced another 15m. The monsoon season (June-September) causes heavy flooding in many parts of the country. Landslides are fairly common in the Himalayas mountain range.

BUSINESSWOMEN

The country provides a generally safe, if not entirely comfortable, environment for foreign female business executives. Attitudes to women can be quite modern in the main cities, but patriarchal structures remain deeply entrenched in smaller towns and rural areas. An increasing number of women are playing a prominent role in the political and commercial life of the country.

Formal meetings should present few problems. It is advisable to dress discreetly, maintain an even conversational tone and show no obvious signs of impatience, frustration or anger – rules that apply equally to male executives. Outside the boardroom, women executives are likely to experience the unwelcome attentions of curious or emboldened men, best dealt with by dressing conservatively, avoiding casual eye contact and not reacting if pestered.

Although there have been reports of the harassment of and sexual assaults on foreign women in major cities and tourist locations, these are much rather an exception than a rule. Sensible precautions, such as not venturing out alone after dark, whether on foot or by taxi, and watching your drink at nightclubs to avoid being drugged, will help ensure safety.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Most major cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai, and tourist destinations, such as Goa, have international airports. Business travellers are most likely to use Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (BOM, also known as Sahar International Airport), Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL) or Bangalore International Airport (BLR). Domestic airports are located in the vicinity of the international airports. Delays or cancellations of flight and rail services to and from Delhi as a result of fog are common during the winter season, which lasts from December to February. Apart from regional and international airlines, India is served by national carrier Air India, as well as several domestic airlines, including Kingfisher and Jet Airways.

Security is generally stringent; armed police patrol airports and all baggage is checked. Hold luggage is screened prior to check-in and hand-luggage is x-rayed once

immigration formalities have been finalised. Female and male travellers are required to pass through security using separate lanes. Travellers should make sure that all hand luggage is labelled and stamped by security before boarding their flight; labels are available at check-in desks. Further security checks take place immediately prior to boarding.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of [airlines](#) banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

There are efficient Thar Express and Samjhauta Express train services connecting India and Pakistan. However, there is a risk of militants targeting these services to disrupt peace talks between the governments of the two countries; explosions in February 2007 occurred on the Samjhauta Express.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

The federal government began a pilot scheme in January 2010 to provide visas on arrival to nationals of Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Luxembourg and Finland. The project is being implemented at major airports in the cities of Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and New Delhi. All other foreign business travellers must obtain a visa from an Indian diplomatic mission before arriving in the country. The process is straightforward, but time-consuming. As a result, personnel are advised to organise their visa at least a week before travel and consider using an agency to undertake the paperwork. Those seeking a business visa require a letter of invitation from a business associate within the country.

Entry/Exit requirements

Foreign nationals must fill in their disembarkation/embarkation cards on arrival/departure. Travellers can bring into India any amount of foreign exchange though they are required to declare it on arrival in the Currency Declaration Form if the total amount of foreign exchange (notes, traveller's cheques) exceeds US\$10,000 or its equivalent and/or the aggregate value of foreign currency notes is more than US\$5,000 or its equivalent. Most personal items can be brought in without restriction.

Procedures

Immigration procedures are thorough and generally courteous, but can be time-consuming. Travellers are required to complete immigration and customs forms prior to arrival. There are two customs channels: green for passengers with nothing to declare and red for passengers carrying items that are subject to duty. Customs officials may require visitors with high-price items, such as laptop computers or video cameras, to complete a Tourist Baggage Re-Export form. This form must be produced when leaving the country, along with the item described. If travellers with multiple entry visas intend to return to India less than two months after their last departure, they are required to visit the nearest Indian diplomatic mission to provide a detailed itinerary of their return visit

and make a case for readmission; they are also required to register with the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) upon arrival.

Foreigners visiting India, who hold long-term visas (more than 180 days), are required to obtain a Registration Certificate and Residential Permit from the nearest FRRO within 15 days of arrival. Foreigners registered at FRRO are also required to report any change of address. Certificates of registration should be surrendered to immigration when leaving the country permanently.

DEPARTURE TAX

An airport tax of Rs500 to most countries, and Rs150 to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, is usually included in the price of the ticket, though this should be confirmed before departure. Furthermore, since March 2009, all domestic and international passengers boarding flights from Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) in Delhi are required to pay an airport development fee of Rs200 (for flights within India) and Rs1,300 (for flights out of the country); this charge will be in place for the next three years.

Indonesia

TRAVEL RISK

Crime poses the most serious risk that the majority of foreigners and expatriates will encounter. Foreigners are at risk of both violent and non-violent crime. There remains a credible risk of terrorist attacks in the capital Jakarta and other main cities against both official and soft targets. All major terrorist attacks in Indonesia since 2002 have targeted foreigners or institutions associated with foreigners. Civil unrest and protests are a common occurrence in major urban areas and tend to be disruptive. Demonstrations occasionally end in clashes with the security forces. Sporadic acts of violence stemming from communal tensions and secessionist activity remain a problem in Aceh, Papua, Maluku and Central Sulawesi. Indonesia is periodically affected by natural disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis and volcano eruptions.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Travel to Aceh, Papua, Maluku and Central Sulawesi should be for essential purposes only, due to risks posed by sporadic violence and banditry. Personnel on essential travel in these areas should seek itinerary-specific advice and consider local security support.
- Be aware permits are required for travel in some of the above provinces; consult with your Indonesian consulate or embassy prior to travel.
- Ensure that you are fully briefed on the prevailing threats and necessary mitigating measures prior to travel.
- Pre-arrange to be met on arrival by a hotel representative or local colleague.
- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist extremists. Potential targets include Western embassies and commercial interests, churches, hotels and entertainment venues popular with Westerners. Avoid unnecessary time spent in

- the vicinity of these locations and maintain awareness of your surroundings. Report any suspicious behavior or packages to the authorities.
- Despite the risk of terrorist attack, to mitigate the risk of harassment or crime, stay in business-class hotels. Base your choice of hotel on the level of security measures in place.
 - Take sensible basic precautions against petty and street crime, particularly pick-pocketing and bag-snatching. After dark, limit travel on foot to well-lit and busy central areas to mitigate the risk of opportunistic crime.
 - Be aware that confidence tricksters may target foreigners; be wary of strangers and their motives. Do not accept food or drink from strangers.
 - Avoid demonstrations, rallies, protests and other large public gatherings to avoid incidental exposure to violence.
 - Do not travel by rickshaw, auto-rickshaw, motorcycle-taxi, minibus, bus, ferry, or rail due to poor safety standards.
 - Taxis are a suitable means of transport in major cities. Do not flag vehicles down on the street; use only taxis obtained through your hotel or host company.
 - Driving standards and road conditions are poor, and recovery services negligible in many areas. Do not self-drive unless very familiar with local conditions, it is preferable to hire a private vehicle and driver. If undertaking overland travel outside of urban areas, ensure that your vehicle is adequately equipped for the terrain and carry full spares, medical kit and adequate means of communications at all times.
 - If involved in a serious road traffic accident, report the incident to the nearest authorities immediately. Do not linger at the scene; foreign drivers are usually blamed in the event of a road traffic accident and aggressive accusatory crowds may develop.
 - Female travellers should dress modestly, particularly outside of major tourist destinations.
 - Be patient and respectful in your dealings with the security forces. Be aware that language assistance may be required if reporting a crime to the police. In the event of being involved in a serious criminal incident, contact your embassy for support.

The above advice is not exhaustive; you should seek itinerary- and profile-specific advice prior to travel in Indonesia.

CRIME

Crime levels have risen as the country's economic situation has worsened. Foreigners can be targeted because of their perceived wealth. Street crime, particularly in Jakarta, is increasingly common and personnel should take precautions against pick pocketing and mugging. Valuables should be kept out of sight and particular care should be taken in places such as shopping centres (malls) and tourist sites that are popular with foreigners. Personnel should never attempt to resist robbers because this greatly increases the likelihood of violence being used; personnel should limit the time they spend travelling on foot, and should avoid walking around alone after dark. Household burglaries, some violent, are also believed to be on the increase; expatriates should ensure that household staff do not leave gates, doors or windows open during the day. Incidents of auto theft have also been reported in Jakarta.

Robberies conducted by criminals in vehicles painted to look similar to taxis from

reputable companies occur regularly. Wherever possible, visitors should avoid hailing a taxi on the street, and should pre-book instead. Incidents have also been reported involving robbers dressed in police uniforms, which are easily available in local shops. Personnel should also be aware of the risk of having their drink spiked; drinks should never be left unattended and personnel should be wary of overly friendly strangers.

TERRORISM

The al-Qaida affiliated Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is the largest and most active terrorist network operating in Indonesia. The group is believed to maintain links with several insurgent groups in Indonesian provinces. While its operational capabilities have been degraded and the movement of its members has been restricted by counter-terrorist operations, particularly since 2005, JI maintains enough capability to launch attacks and continues to pose a significant threat. JI's operations have focused on Indonesia and the neighbouring Philippines, though there are indications that it has a presence in southern Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. The network aims to create a pan-Islamic state in the Asia Pacific region, which would be centred in Indonesia and include Malaysia, the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, Singapore and northern Australia.

Indiscriminate bombing is the most common method of terrorist attack in Indonesia. Likely targets include the public areas of hotels, shopping centres (malls), churches, and entertainment venues or restaurants where Westerners tend to gather; personnel should minimise time spent in such locations to mitigate the risks. Jakarta and popular tourist resorts in Bali are among the most attractive militant targets. There have been fears that extremists might broaden their tactics to include assassinations or kidnaps, but no such incidents have been reported to date.

Following a period of relative calm, JI suicide bombers on 17 July 2009 carried out near-simultaneous attacks on the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in south Jakarta, killing at least nine people and injuring up to 50 others. The embassies of China, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Peru, Finland and Uzbekistan were temporarily closed after the explosions. Earlier terrorist attacks against Western targets include multiple bombings in the popular Jimbaran and Kuta tourist areas of Bali in October 2005, which killed 20 people, including four Australians; a suicide car bombing in September 2004 at the Australian embassy in Jakarta; a suicide car bomb in August 2003 at the JW Marriott hotel; and the devastating October 2002 bombing in Kuta, Bali, which was the most serious terrorist attack in the country's history. Anonymous groups made threats against Western embassies and senior government officials in November 2008 ahead of the executions of three Islamist militants convicted of involvement in the 2002 Bali bombings.

SOCIAL UNREST

Protests linked to political and religious interest groups are common. Underlying ethnic, religious and political tensions have resulted in rioting and violence throughout much of the archipelago, as have external events, such as cartoons published in Danish newspapers depicting the Islamic prophet Muhammad in February 2006, the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon in July 2006 and the Israeli incursion in the Gaza Strip in December 2008. While electoral violence has become less common since the late 1990s, sporadic protests and clashes could occur in the run-up to and during local and provincial polls.

Demonstrations can be disruptive and should be avoided as a routine security precaution. The security forces sometimes struggle to contain large crowds.

Demonstrations are usually publicised in advance by the media and participating organisations. Most large rallies take place in Jakarta; the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, the Hotel Indonesia (HI) roundabout and Merdeka Square are popular sites for protests and street gatherings. The US embassy in Jakarta is also the focus of protests in response to developments in the Middle East. However, frustration is rarely targeted at private citizens.

CONFLICT

There are long running secessionist struggles in Aceh, Papua and Maluku, and in recent years there have been incidents of communal conflict in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Java and eastern Indonesia. Underpinning each of these conflicts is a complex web of competing interests and grievances, which often run along ethnic and religious fault lines. Political settlements have been reached in Aceh and Papua but the security situation remains fragile in both areas.

Indonesia has unresolved border disputes with East Timor, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. The dispute with East Timor involves the Oecussi enclave within Indonesia's West Timor province. East Timor has called for a demilitarisation of the Oecussi border, where more than 1,000 Indonesian troops are deployed.

KIDNAPPING

Almost all recorded cases of kidnap-for-ransom have taken place within the ethnic Chinese community. Kidnaps of foreigners have occurred in remote areas affected by separatist conflict as a way of gaining media interest.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Indonesia is a presidential republic; the president is both the head of state and of government. The country underwent a series of political reforms, including new rules for political parties, the electoral system and parliamentary bodies, in 1999 aimed at building a liberal democratic framework. Legislative elections in 2004 resulted in the inaugural fully elected DPR (lower house), after a vote in the MPR (upper house) in 2002 that mandated the abolition of non- or indirectly-elected representatives. Presidential polls in July and September 2004 signified a major change in the political environment, with the president being directly elected for the first time and restricted to two terms in office. The country's attempt to establish a fully fledged democracy continued in 2005 with the first direct elections of provincial governors, mayors and regents (heads of district governments). The Democratic Party (PD) led by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is currently in power having won the election in April 2009. Yudhoyono himself was re-elected in the July presidential elections.

In recent years the only organised group capable of staging a coup has been the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI). However, the politicisation of the military has become less pronounced over time, and there is currently little to suggest that any such action by the armed forces is imminent or probable. The country's political institutions are weak

and the democratic process remains fragile; if the government fails to address poverty and other pressing concerns, there is a risk that the country might experience a return to authoritarianism.

RULE OF LAW

Indonesia has a pluralistic legal system. The main sources of law include Dutch colonial law and statutes, adapt law (customary law) and Shariah law (Islamic law). The courts and the police are commonly inefficient and corrupt. Police officers are generally polite to foreigners but often attempt to solicit bribes. When dealing with the police, it is important to be very patient. Business visitors who are reporting a crime or have other business should expect a lengthy bureaucratic process. They are advised to take an associate with them who can speak fluent Indonesian.

CORRUPTION

Successive governments have failed to deal with corruption, which is systemic and widespread. The legal system is regarded as particularly corrupt, from the police to the judges. Police officers sometimes threaten to arrest people if they are not given a bribe, while prison custodians often demand payments to release prisoners. Judicial decisions are also subject to bribery.

Business travellers and expatriates are likely to be subject to solicitation for bribes, most notably from customs officials, immigration officers and the police (particularly in the run-up to the Eid holiday) eager to supplement their income.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Indonesia is prone to earthquakes due to its location over the intersection of several tectonic plates; it experiences an average of 7,000 tremors a year and occasional tsunamis. The 26 December 2004 tsunami devastated coastal areas of Aceh and other parts of northern Sumatra and killed over 130,000 people in the country. Droughts during the summer coupled with massive deforestation have resulted in regular forest fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra, creating a serious smog and air pollution problem that has spread to other islands. Flooding and landslides following heavy rains are common during the monsoon season, from December to April. There are also numerous volcanoes in Indonesia, which can erupt without warning.

WOMEN

Although Indonesia is very much a male-dominated society, Muslim women enjoy much more freedom than in many orthodox Middle Eastern societies. Many Indonesian women are well-educated and employed in the workforce, and some hold middle-management positions.

Women are advised to dress modestly, avoiding wearing shorts, short skirts and sleeveless dresses, particularly in staunchly Muslim areas such as Aceh and areas where locals may be unfamiliar with Westerners. Single young women travelling alone should take particular care. Blonde-haired, Caucasian women tend to attract more unwelcome male attention than dark-haired, Caucasian women. Some female travellers

find it useful to invent a boyfriend or husband and mention that they plan to meet him soon. Older women are generally treated with great respect.

Some general precautions will further reduce any threats to individual women's security. Female travellers are advised to:

- Ensure that room numbers remain confidential. Do not display your hotel room key tag in public areas, and emphasise that staff must not give the room number to anyone.
- Make sure the room has a key-chain, deadlock and spy-hole.
- Book a suite on an executive floor if business meetings are to be held in the hotel.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Several international carriers operate services connecting the major Indonesian hubs to a number of airports.

Main international airports

The main international airports in Indonesia are Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (CGK) in Jakarta, Denpasar Airport (DPS) on Bali island, Polonia International Airport (MES), which serves Medan and Adisucipto International Airport (JOG), in the Yogyakarta special region (Java island). Jakarta is the main point of entry and operates as a hub for international flights. However, Bali also serves many international destinations. Some travellers choose to fly via Singapore, which has connections to airports including Pekanbaru (Riau), Medan (North Sumatra), Balikpapan (East Kalimantan), Mataram (Lombok), Bali and Surabaya (East Java). The national carrier, Garuda Indonesia, serves several international destinations.

Airport security

Security at the country's international airports is adequate. On departure, all hold and hand-carried luggage is passed through an X-ray machine. Tickets and luggage are liable to be checked as passengers enter the departure hall, and security staff search any suspicious bags. Passengers pass through a metal detector and their hand luggage may be checked again before they enter the departure lounge.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Visa-free entry was revoked in 2004 for citizens of all states that do not have a reciprocal agreement with Indonesia. Only Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Turkey, Peru, Chile, Morocco, Hong Kong and Macao have such an arrangement. Visitors from 63 countries can obtain visas on arrival. A 30-day visa costs \$25 and it can be extended for another 30 days. Those intending to work in the country need to apply for a visa from an Indonesian embassy. Passengers must first queue to

pay for the visa and then take the receipt to the next desk to obtain the visa. Visitors should note that there are often long queues at these desks and they should anticipate delays of up to 30 minutes.

Travel restrictions apply in some areas, such as Aceh and Maluku, and permits are often required before travelling. Business personnel should seek advice on restricted areas from the Indonesian consulate or embassy in their home country. Several airports and sea ports are able to accept pay-on-arrival visa applicants; it is advisable to check the foreign ministry website in advance.

Entry/Exit requirements

Foreign visitors are often asked to show a confirmed return air ticket, and proof of onward travel arrangements is recommended. In addition, all visitors must possess a passport that is valid for at least six months from their date of arrival. All visitors will be photographed, have their passport scanned and fingerprints taken electronically upon arrival at CGK in Jakarta, JOG in Yogyakarta and Adisumarmo International Airport (SOC) in Surakarta (Solo, Java island). Long queues and delays should be expected at this point. Foreigners holding a limited stay permit card (KITAS) and Indonesian nationals are exempt from the procedure. Visitors with an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Travel Card or a diplomatic passport can use the queue on the right for fast-track immigration processing. The stamped immigration card must be returned upon departure.

Procedures

Passengers proceeding through the 'Nothing to Declare' zone are not normally searched. Departing passengers may encounter problems with return bookings and should ensure that they reconfirm all reservations and are issued a reconfirmation number. There is no problem in bringing in portable (laptop) computers, though these may have to be screened.

DEPARTURE TAX

All travellers are required to pay an airport tax; this applies to both domestic and international flights. Since March 2009, the departure tax at most airports for passengers on international flights ranges between 75,000 and 150,000 rupiah, while for domestic passengers it is 20,000 to 40,000 rupiah plus a 10% value-added tax (VAT).

In addition to the airport tax, all Indonesian nationals and foreigners who are employed in Indonesia are required to pay a fiscal tax of 1m rupiah every time they leave the country; this is an advance payment on their income tax and can be reclaimed when they file their annual tax returns. Temporary visitors do not need to pay the fiscal tax.

Japan

TRAVEL RISK

Japan is less attractive as a target to Islamist extremists than more ardent supporters of the US-led war on terrorism, such as the UK. However, a terrorist attack in Japan remains feasible. Crime, particularly among disaffected youths, is rising in urban areas, but the country remains one of the world's safest destinations for foreign travellers. Kidnapping, particularly of foreigners, is rare. Japan experiences frequent earth tremors and occasional, larger earthquakes.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Crime rates are low; take sensible basic precautions against petty and street crime.
- As a high-profile commercial centre and prominent ally of the US, Japan is a potential target for terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists. Domestic leftist, nationalist and other extremists have used violence in the past and further attacks are possible. The risk posed to travellers is low; nevertheless, report suspicious behaviour or suspect packages to the authorities.

CRIME

Streets in the central business areas of major cities are generally safe for foreigners at all times. Petty crime such as pick pocketing and bag-snatching is a problem in crowded areas such as shopping areas, train stations and airports. The Roppongi entertainment district of Tokyo, in particular, has a reputation for crime. Organised criminal gangs, the yakuza, operate mostly against Japanese, and foreigners are generally treated with considerable respect.

SOCIAL UNREST

There were a series of protests by trade and labour groups in early 2009 in reaction to the global economic crisis. Politically motivated protests occur with some frequency, and activists occasionally carry out small arson attacks against military installations and symbols of the imperial family. However, incidents of arson usually occur late at night and do not target foreigners. There is some anti-US sentiment about the military presence in Japan and there have been several protests against the US bases in Okinawa. Unidentified assailants threw a Molotov cocktail into the compound of the US consulate-general in the city of Urasoe in Okinawa in July 2008, causing little damage to the building.

TERRORISM

There is no evidence of homegrown terrorist groups in Japan, though left-wing activists and ultra-right nationalists have carried out small-scale attacks. While Japan's role in the US-led reconstruction of Iraq makes it a possible target for Islamist groups, Japanese personnel and assets are less attractive than those of other US allies, such as the UK.

Moreover, Japan's effective domestic security forces, tight immigration controls and the small size of its Muslim community render it difficult for militants to operate successfully in the country.

CONFLICT

Japan is embroiled in territorial disputes over three sets of islands:

- the Kurile islands north of Hokkaido, which the Soviet Union occupied in 1945 and are now Russian;
- the Senkaku islands in the East Japan Sea, which are occupied by Japan, but claimed by Taiwan and China; and
- the Takeshima/Tokdo islands in the Sea of Japan, which are occupied by Japan but claimed by South Korea.

All are low-key disputes that occasionally escalate, often because of domestic political considerations in one of the countries. Fishing rights and national pride are all that is at stake in these disputes.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Political stability is assured. Japan is a democracy with a constitutional monarch (the emperor) and a bicameral parliament, the Diet. The two houses of parliament are the Lower House (House of Representatives) and the Upper House (House of Councillors).

The major parties are characterised by factional infighting and prime ministers have been known to serve short terms, but this does not affect governance. In general elections conducted in August 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) defeated the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which had been in power for nearly 50 years. DPJ leader Yukio Hatoyama in September 2009 became prime minister.

RULE OF LAW

The main law-enforcement agency in Japan is the National Police Agency, which reports to the prime minister. Most day-to-day policing is carried out by the prefectural police, which report to the prefectural governors. Administrative law enforcement duties are carried out by inspection departments of the various cabinet ministers.

In comparison to other countries in the developed world, Japan has a unique prosecutorial system. Ninety-nine percent of defendants are convicted in Japan, with almost all being convicted following their own confession. Japan has a death penalty that can be invoked by the minister of justice for murder, arson and crimes against humanity.

The 1947 Constitution states that 'local public entities shall have the right to manage their property, affairs and administration and to enact their own regulations within law.' Despite this provision for local autonomy, the basic pattern of managing service delivery in Japan remains generally centralised. Under the current local autonomy system, it is hard to draw a clear line between the jurisdiction of local governments and that of central government, though it is mostly agreed that the degree of autonomy of local

governments is limited and that many policies are formulated and decisions taken at the central level.

CORRUPTION

Japanese society has a long, intricate and iron-clad system of patronage between corporations, government, bureaucracy and politicians. This produces a system of governance that is as questionable as many of the more corrupt regimes in the developing world. News reports have reinforced the image of Japanese politicians as profoundly corrupt and lacking transparency.

The behaviour of their politicians over the past ten years has led to the belief that corruption is part of the country's political culture and, by consequence, its business culture as well. The everyday corruption that marks out living and working in corrupt countries in the developing world is absent in Japan.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Japan is in a seismically active zone and earthquakes of varying magnitude occur frequently. There is also a risk of tsunamis due to seismic activity in the Pacific, though the country has established an advanced early warning and evacuation system.

The country is also affected by tropical storms from May to October each year. Strong typhoons usually result in flooding in coastal areas; these tend to occur in September and October. Japan also has several active volcanoes.

BUSINESSWOMEN

Although Japanese businesswomen rarely reach senior positions in major companies, Western businesswomen are an accepted part of the business environment and do not generally encounter cultural or security problems.

Women should not travel alone to unfamiliar or unlit urban areas after dark.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Around 50 international airlines fly to Japan. Japan's main airlines are Japan Airlines (JAL), Japan Air System (JAS) and All Nippon Airways (ANA). All these airlines are generally safe and reliable, though services are occasionally disrupted by industrial action. Services may be disrupted due to inclement weather in the winter months.

Main international airports

There are international airports at Tokyo, Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Nagoya and Osaka. New Tokyo International Airport (usually referred to as Narita) and Kansai International Airport (serving Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe) are the largest. The others mainly provide short-haul international flights. Signs are in English as well as Japanese.

Airport security

Narita is one of the world's most secure airports. Airport security was further tightened following the despatch of military personnel on a humanitarian mission to Iraq in 2004. Visitors may see armed security force personnel patrolling at airports.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Australians, Canadian, New Zealand and US nationals on visits of 90 days or less, as well as British and Irish nationals on visits of six months or less, do not need to obtain a visa before arrival. Also, visitors from Taiwan can travel and stay in Japan without a visa for up to three months. However, a business visa is required for executives intending to work or engage in fee-based activities.

Procedures

Narita has only one runway, and taxiing to and from the new terminal can take up to 30 minutes. Some airlines operating out of Narita have check-in desks at Tokyo City Air Terminal (T-CAT) in the city centre, but baggage should be checked in three to four hours before the flight's scheduled departure. Immigration and customs formalities are usually hassle-free, though customs officers often question incoming foreign nationals. Immigration delays are most common at Narita.

Foreign visitors should carry their passports at all times. This is a legal requirement, and while spot-checks are infrequent, offenders are subject to lengthy bureaucracy. As of 20 November 2007, new anti-terrorism legislation requires all foreign nationals to be photographed and electronically fingerprinted upon arrival. Only those personnel with permanent residency, visiting for official purposes (or by government invitation) or under 16 years of age will be exempt from the measures. Passengers must complete a customs declaration form upon arrival. There is no limit on the amount of currency that may be brought into or taken out of Japan.

DEPARTURE TAX

Departure tax is usually included in the cost of the airline ticket from both Tokyo's Narita International Airport and Osaka's Kansai International Airport.

Korea (South)

TRAVEL RISK

In general, crime, particularly violent crime, poses a low risk to business personnel. City-centre protests and demonstrations occasionally end in clashes with riot police. Periodic surges in anti-US or anti-Japanese sentiment very rarely provoke harassment of individual foreign visitors.

In May 2009, North Korea conducted its second nuclear weapons test and carried out several short-range ballistic missile tests. While these provocative moves, along with persistent threatening rhetoric, have earned international condemnation and increased tensions in the region, they do not pose any direct security risks or appear likely to lead to a major conflict.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Take basic security precautions against petty and street crime.
- Avoid demonstrations, rallies and strikes due to the risk of clashes with the security forces; do not stop to watch or photograph them.
- Anticipate periodic disruption in the capital Seoul and other major cities from air raid drills and military manoeuvres; comply with all instructions issued by the security forces.

CRIME

Although the crime rate in South Korea is very low by international standards, low-level robberies and burglaries do occur and foreigners can be targeted. In addition, violent crimes and physical attacks on foreigners, including sexual harassment, molestation and rape, have been occasionally reported. Personnel can reduce the risk of falling victim to crime by taking the same precautions that they would take in any developed country.

SOCIAL UNREST

Student- or union-led street protests leading to clashes with the security forces are not the feature of urban life that they were in the 1980s and 1990s. Demonstrations, though frequent and often disruptive, are usually peaceful. Violence, when it occurs, is usually limited to the immediate vicinity of the protest and does not escalate into rioting or attacks on bystanders. However, there have been allegations of police violence in recent demonstrations, ranging from the use of excessive force and riot control devices (water cannons, batons, fire extinguishers) to arbitrary arrests of demonstrators and bystanders, and inhumane treatment of detainees. In January 2009, at least six people were killed and 17 others injured in clashes between the police and demonstrators, during a rally against a land development project in Seoul. In May 2009, anti-government protests prompted by the funeral of former president Roh Moo-hyun turned violent after the police prevented student activists from entering a commercial complex in the capital. Some demonstrations are anti-US or anti-Japanese in nature, though individual foreigners are rarely singled out for attack. As a precaution, personnel should avoid all large public gatherings.

TERRORISM

There are no known terrorist groups operating in South Korea and the risk of terrorism from the North is low. However, the country has been threatened by militant groups demanding cessation of its involvement in US-led operations in Iraq. Although South Korea has one of the largest contingents in Iraq, it is not the most vocal or prominent US ally and, as such, might be considered a less attractive target. Furthermore, while an attack in South Korea cannot be entirely ruled out, it would be difficult to carry out in a

largely homogenous society with only a small Muslim community. Stringent security measures have been implemented at major international airports to guard against the entry of suspected terrorists.

CONFLICT

North Korea

South Korea remains technically at war with North Korea. South Korea has thousands of troops stationed in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and these are supported by approximately 37,000 US troops. The US has plans to redeploy troops away from the DMZ to locations south of the capital. There have been occasional clashes between South and North Korean troops along maritime borders. The last major confrontation was in June 1999, in which several South Korean naval assets were damaged.

After the first nuclear test in October 2006, North Korea in 2007 agreed to disable its nuclear facilities. Some sanctions against the country were lifted after it submitted a declaration of its nuclear activities and destroyed the cooling tower in its Yongbyon reactor in June 2008. However, the process collapsed in December 2008 when the north refused to allow access to its facilities for verification measures. In May 2009, North Korea carried out an underground nuclear test and launched several short-range missiles. South Korean troops, particularly those stationed along the western sea border, as well as US troops stationed in the peninsula, were placed on alert. These latest provocations by North Korea have brought international condemnation and increased tensions in the region. The country has a history of alternating threats and aggression with periodic conciliatory gestures and talks to strengthen its negotiating position and extract concessions from the international community.

Japan

South Korea and Japan continue to contest claims over the islets of Dokdo (Takeshima in Japanese) and the latter has consistently been accused of failing fully to repent for its wartime aggression or abandon colonial claims on Korean territory.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The Republic of Korea has a government with executive power vested in the head of state (president). The prime minister's job is largely ceremonial and the president holds most of the political power. Legislation is the responsibility of the unicameral Kuk Hoe (National Assembly). The system is that of a multi-party democracy; centre-left Uri Party and conservative Grand National Party (GNP) are the major parties. The party system has relatively weak linkages with society, is factionalised, focused on personalities and is characterised by a high degree of organisational instability that results in frequent splits and mergers.

Democracy is entrenched and the risk of an unconstitutional seizure of power is low. Governments have failed to reduce the special role of the country's chaebol (conglomerates), which continue to dominate the economy, resist aspects of reform, and retain close political relationships.

The state has full control over security and police forces. The bureaucracy is efficient, if not somewhat over-regulated and politicised. There is a restrictive interpretation of labour rights by public authorities and left-wing or pro-North Korean organisations are prohibited under the controversial National Security Law (NSL).

RULE OF LAW

Although there have been serious attempts in the recent past to free the judiciary from political interference, institutional obstacles and bureaucratic traditions remain. While a workable mode of checks and balances between the parliament and the presidency has not emerged, the judiciary remains relatively independent from executive and legislative control. In January 2002, the Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC) was established to prevent corruption and ensure transparent governance. There have been complaints that the body lacks adequate investigative powers.

The police are generally courteous and efficient when dealing with foreigners.

CORRUPTION

Favours, donations and pay-offs are an integral part of the political system, and corruption is prevalent in politics. The extent of the problem became particularly acute in the mid-1990s, when corrupt links between officials, construction companies and banks were discovered to be the root cause of a series of civil disasters. The scale of such scandals has moderated since its peak. The problem certainly persists, but public and media attention, as well as enhanced oversight agencies, have increased the risks to corrupt businesspeople and officials.

Bribery in exchange for business contracts is unlikely to affect business travellers and expatriates.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Typhoons are common in the southern regions between June and September. Flooding regularly interrupts essential services.

WOMEN

South Korea is a relatively safe place for foreign women, though they should take sensible precautions such as not travelling alone after dark. However, the business environment is overwhelmingly male-dominated, which may lead to cultural misunderstandings in business situations.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Most major international airlines fly to Seoul. There are direct flights to Seoul from most capitals in south-east and north-east Asia, and from most major cities in Japan to Seoul, Pusan and Cheju. South Korea's two main carriers are Korean Air (KAL) and Asiana

Airlines; the latter operates mostly within Asia. Following questions about KAL's safety procedures in the 1990s, the airline has made efforts to improve its safety regime and has enjoyed an improvement in its safety record. Both are satisfactory, if unexceptional, airlines.

Main international airports

Incheon International Airport (ICN) has replaced Gimpo as the international airport serving Seoul (Incheon is the port city virtually adjacent to the capital). Gimpo Airport (GMP, previously known as Kimpo) now serves mainly domestic flights. Pusan has GimHae International Airport (PUS), which operates flights to the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Fukuoka.

Airport security

Security procedures are rigorous. Travellers are often body searched, and luggage is searched thoroughly (batteries in hand luggage are removed and returned later).

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Visas for trips lasting less than 30 days are not required. For longer stays, executives should obtain a business visa well in advance of their visit. South Korean embassies are sometimes slow in issuing visas. Most leisure travellers making visits of up to 30 days do not need to obtain a visa. Taiwanese nationals can travel and stay in South Korea visa-free for up to three months.

Entry/Exit requirements

The export of 'significant' Korean cultural properties is prohibited.

Procedures

Foreigners whose passports contain evidence of travel to North Korea may face thorough and time-consuming checks. Otherwise, airport procedures are relatively efficient. Visitors should make a declaration if they are bringing large amounts of cash or traveller's cheques into the country.

DEPARTURE TAX

The departure tax for international flights (10,000 won) is almost always included in the air fare.

Laos

TRAVEL RISK

Crime poses the main risk for foreign visitors. There has been a steady increase in thefts and assaults in recent years, though overall crime rates are still relatively low. Sporadic and low intensity terrorist bombings present an indirect risk to foreign visitors. The security forces can subject foreigners to stringent security checks and surveillance.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Avoid non-essential travel to the Xaysomboune, Longsan, Phun and Hom districts of Vientiane province and Xieng Khouang province due to the risks posed by banditry and ethnic conflict. Personnel on essential business in these areas should seek itinerary-specific advice prior to travel.
- Carry original identification documents at all times in case of stop-checks.
- Take sensible basic security precautions to mitigate risks of petty and street crime.
- Small-scale and unattributed bomb attacks occur periodically posing an incidental risk to travellers. Past targets have included public transport, markets and entertainment venues. Report any suspicious behaviour or packages to the authorities.
- Air travel is preferable to travel by road. Road conditions and driving standards are poor and highway robbery a problem in some areas; seek expert advice prior to overland travel in rural areas, which should only be undertaken in day light.
- Public transport, including tricycles and three-wheeled tuk-tuks, is not suitable for business travellers.
- Be aware that involvement in religious and political activities could lead to arrest and detention.
- Treat members of the security forces you encounter with patience and respect. In the event of an emergency or serious criminal incident, contact your embassy for support.
- The above advice is not exhaustive; seek itinerary- and profile-specific advice prior to travel in Laos.

CRIME

The level of crime in Laos is generally low; however, since 2006 there has been an increase in assaults, thefts (including house break-ins) and bag-snatching in the capital Vientiane and the popular tourist town of Luang Prabang. This trend has been attributed to an increasing use of illicit drugs, and foreigners may be targeted because of their perceived wealth. Theft from hotel rooms is a problem, though is less likely to affect people staying in business-class hotels; nevertheless personnel are advised to keep valuables in the hotel safe. Personnel should never resist if confronted by an armed assailant.

TERRORISM

The capital Vientiane has experienced periodic bomb attacks in recent years. The government generally releases few details about such incidents, contributing to the lack of understanding about the perpetrators and their goals. The attacks are unlikely to have a single source, though attention has focused on ethnic Hmong rebels. However, banditry, organised criminal gangs, Lao and Hmong diaspora groups based in the US, or even rogue elements of the military cannot be discounted. Most attacks are small-scale and inflict few injuries, though some are fatal. Foreigners do not appear to be targeted, though there is a risk of becoming caught up in an attack. Attacks in other parts of the country on buses and boats have caused numerous casualties, including some foreign nationals. Such incidents are believed to be conducted by a range of perpetrators, with motives including banditry, insurgency, and general opposition to the government.

SOCIAL UNREST

The authorities maintain tight political control and there are no official opposition parties. Dissent is dealt with harshly by the authorities.

CONFLICT

Hmong armed groups, which are remnants of an army that was once backed by the CIA during the Vietnam War, continue a low-level insurgency in rural areas. As a result of this insurgency, the entire Hmong population is distrusted by the government, though not all of the community support the rebels. The insurgents are most concentrated in jungle areas in the north-east.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Laos has been ruled by the communist People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) since 1975. The LPRP is a totalitarian regime and opposition parties are not permitted to function. Although opposition to the government manifests itself in occasional terrorist attacks and a low-level insurgency in the north-east, no group has so far demonstrated that they possess the capacity to seriously threaten the ruling regime.

In March 2006, the ruling party convened its eighth plenary congress and selected a new party secretary-general, Choummaly Sayasone, who is also the current president. The congress also selected 55 Central Committee members and 11 members of the politburo, which is the key decision-making body.

RULE OF LAW

The LPRP controls the courts and many political activists have been held for years without trial. Arbitrary detention and torture are believed to be widespread. Trials are often lengthy, particularly those involving complaints against the government. Although the government's monitoring of the population has reduced in recent years, searches without warrants are still known to occur.

Dealing with the police is invariably difficult and time consuming. Obtaining a police report in the event of theft or an accident can take hours, and requires tact and patience.

Personnel travelling around late at night may be searched, detained and even fined if they cannot present suitable identification.

CORRUPTION

Corruption is widespread in Laos. Although the government has made announcements about its determination to curb the problem, little progress has been made. Business travellers and expatriates are likely to be solicited for bribes, most notably from customs officials, immigration staff and the police.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Floods are common during the rainy season between early May and the end of September. Laos is also prone to earthquakes because two major tectonic folds run through the country.

WOMEN

Female visitors should not encounter difficulties conducting business in Laos. Women participate freely in the workforce and have equal rights in land ownership and inheritance. They also mix far more freely with foreign men than women in other Buddhist countries. This means that women visiting bars and restaurants alone is accepted, though it is advisable to be accompanied where possible. Other religious and cultural practices very much favour men. Sexual harassment is rare, but a single woman travelling alone without male company is nevertheless considered strange. Dress is relatively casual. However, it is important to dress neatly and appropriately, especially covering the shoulders and wearing shoes.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

There are three international airports: Wattay International Airport (VTE) in Vientiane, Luang Prabang International Airport (LPQ) and Pakse International Airport (PKZ). The national carrier is Lao Airlines.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

The country borders Thailand, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, China and Vietnam. It is possible to catch a train or bus and then change transport at the border to cross into Laos. Five of the seven crossings on the western border with Thailand involve a short boat ride across the Mekong River. Personnel can also cross at the Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge, which connects the capital Vientiane with Nong Khai (Thailand). There are direct buses between downtown Vientiane and Nong Khai, and regular trains between Nong Khai and the Thai capital Bangkok. Since February 2009, a limited rail service has linked

the country's only train station at Thanaleng, approximately 7.5 miles (12km) from the centre of Vientiane, with Thailand via the bridge. The journey takes 15 minutes and the service departs daily at 10.45 and 17.00; it connects with an overnight train service to Bangkok. Travellers are permitted to bring their own vehicles into Laos from Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia providing they have the correct paperwork.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Visas are required for all nationalities except for Japanese, Russian and ASEAN visitors. Tourist visas are valid for 30 days and can be obtained upon arrival at VTE and LPQ airports, and at the Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge. However, it is advisable to obtain visas prior to travel because arrival formalities can be time-consuming and chaotic. Passport photographs are required for a visa on arrival. As of 1 January 2009, they cost US\$37 (cash only). However, the visa on arrival option is not available at the Paksan crossing, or the southern crossing from Cambodia. If travelling from Cambodia to Laos overland, you must obtain your visa before travel from a Lao diplomatic mission. All tourist visas are single-entry. Tourist visas can be extended for up to 30 days at US\$2-3 per day from the Bureau of Immigration (Bureau of Aliens and Foreigners Protection) opposite the morning market in Lane Xang Avenue, Vientiane. There is a fine of US\$10 per day for overstaying a tourist visa, which is imposed; the fine can be paid at the Bureau of Immigration or at the Friendship Bridge on departure.

Entry/Exit requirements

Lao immigration requires passports to have at least 6 months' validity. Travellers are advised to check their passports when entering and leaving Laos, to ensure they have received a correctly dated entry/exit stamp. Penalties can apply for entering Laos without an entry stamp and for crossing the border at non-authorized crossing points. The export of antique items, such as Buddha images and other cultural artefacts, is prohibited.

DEPARTURE TAX

There is no departure tax if exiting using a land crossing. If departing from VTE or LPQ international airports, there was previously a tax of US\$10; however, as of January 2009 this has been incorporated into the price of airline ticket.

Malaysia

TRAVEL RISK

The security forces are far more capable of maintaining order than in many other parts of the region. As a result, the crime rate is generally low, with burglary posing the greatest risk. Petty crime usually occurs in crowded areas that are popular with tourists and expatriates and financial scams may also target foreign visitors. The crime levels in Kuala Lumpur and its surroundings are higher than in other parts of the country; armed robbers and street gangs are becoming bolder in their operations. Kidnaps-for-ransom

are reported periodically, but almost all cases occur within the Malaysian-Chinese community. There is a low, but credible risk of terrorism.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Be aware that confidence tricksters and petty thieves may target foreigners. Take basic security precautions against petty theft and be wary of strangers and their motives.
- There is a low, but credible risk of small-scale opportunistic and large-scale spectacular terrorist attack by Islamist extremists in Malaysia. Maintain awareness of your surroundings and report any suspicious behaviour or suspect packages to the authorities.
- Dress modestly and respect Muslim cultural sensitivities.

CRIME

Malaysia has generally low crime rates. Violent crime remains relatively rare, but a recent series of high-profile armed robberies has suggested that criminal gangs are becoming bolder. Petty crime presents the main risk to foreigners, particularly at airports and in areas that are popular with tourists; personnel should take sensible precautions against pick pocketing and bag-snatching (which is often perpetrated by individuals on motorcycles). The crime rates are higher in and around the capital Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru (JB), though the risks are lower in upmarket hotel and business districts.

The counterfeiting of US currency is becoming prevalent in Malaysia and visitors are advised to conduct their financial dealings in banks or reputed hotels. Credit card fraud is also a growing problem; visitors should limit the use of credit cards to hotels and major shops where possible. Personnel are advised to exercise extra caution at bars or clubs and not to accept food or drinks from strangers as spiked drinks have resulted in assaults and robberies.

SOCIAL UNREST

The security forces tend to crack down on large protests heavy-handedly; personnel should avoid all such events because of the incidental risk of violence. Anti-government protests occasionally take place outside mosques on Friday afternoons. These can cause traffic disruption, particularly in the vicinity of the Masjid Negara (National Mosque) on Jalan Perdana in the capital Kuala Lumpur. Growing anti-government sentiment, particularly with regard to its pro-Malay policies, has prompted a series of demonstrations since 2007.

There are also occasional anti-US demonstrations outside the US embassy on Jalan Tun Razak. Major domestic and international issues can spark off large-scale protests, as seen, for example, during the 1999 trial of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim and at the start of US-led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Racial tensions between the Malay, Chinese and Indian communities are a constant undercurrent, though this has not led to significant unrest since riots in 1969. Ethnic advocacy groups have become more vocal since 2007.

TERRORISM

There is a low, but credible risk of terrorism in Malaysia. A number of Malaysian nationals is known to have been involved with Islamist extremist groups and transnational Islamist terrorist networks. There is considerable anti-Western feeling in some parts of the community and a significant level of sympathy for extremist groups. However, there has been no history of terrorist attacks on soft Western targets in Malaysia and since attacks in Bali (Indonesia) in October 2002, the government has enhanced its overt and covert surveillance of areas in the capital Kuala Lumpur and elsewhere where Westerners congregate.

There are concerns that the regional Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) network – which is believed to have been responsible for a series of attacks in Indonesia, including the Bali bombings – may be active in Malaysia. Abu Bakar Bashir, who is said to be the spiritual leader of JI, lived in the country until the 1990s and Malaysian nationals are alleged to have held senior positions within the network.

The authorities in June 2001 announced that they had dismantled a local extremist organisation. The group, the Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM), is said to have had more than 50 key members. The security forces blamed the KMM for a number of incidents, including explosions at religious sites, the murder of a Christian politician and a series of robberies. There was no indication or evidence that the group had intended to conduct attacks against foreign personnel or assets or that it had links to regional or international extremist networks.

The state of Sabah is a well-known staging post on the smuggling and infiltration route between Mindanao (Philippines) and the province of Kalimantan (Indonesia). A number of militants has been arrested in Sabah, though they were believed to have been transiting through Malaysia, rather than planning attacks there.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnaps-for-ransom are reported periodically, but almost all cases occur within the Malaysian-Chinese community; personnel of East Asian origin may be at higher risk. The South African deputy high commissioner was kidnapped in 2004 in the capital Kuala Lumpur; he was released one week later after being forced to withdraw funds from his bank account. Express kidnaps – where victims are forced to withdraw money from automated teller machines (ATMs) – are reportedly on the rise; personnel are advised to avoid using ATMs that are accessible from the street.

The Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has previously abducted tourists from resorts in Sabah, though no Westerners have been kidnapped since 2000, when the ASG abducted 21 foreigners from Sipadan island. The group also the same year abducted three Malaysians from a resort on Pandanan island. The ASG in October 2003 abducted Indonesian and Filipino workers from the Borneo Paradise Resort.

CONFLICT

Malaysia is in dispute with a number of regional neighbours over border and territory issues, though it is not involved in any active hostilities. There is a dispute between

Malaysia and Indonesia over the oil-rich seabed off Sulawesi island (Indonesia). Both countries in March 2005 deployed warships to the disputed area after Malaysia granted oil exploration rights to a private oil company. Malaysia is also involved in a dispute with Brunei, China, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam over a number of islands in the South China Sea.

Relations with Thailand have become troubled as a result of an insurgency in southern Thailand, which borders Malaysia. Malaysia has objected to the harsh tactics that Thai troops sporadically employ in efforts to contain the unrest. This has manifested itself in protest through diplomatic channels as well as the refusal to repatriate Thai refugees who have fled to Malaysia unless Thailand guarantees their civil liberties. Thailand also suspects that some of the attacks are being coordinated from Malaysian soil, a claim that is roundly rejected.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The country is made up of 13 states and three federal territories. Except for Melaka and Penang, all the peninsular Malaysian states have hereditary rulers. The eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo island have governors appointed by the national government. These two states have certain constitutionally autonomous powers, such as control over immigration. Kuala Lumpur is the capital and seat of government; Putrajaya is the administrative capital where all government ministries are located. The monarchy rotates every five years between the leaders of the nine state royal families. The monarch, known as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, plays a largely ceremonial role.

The country is a largely stable democracy. The bicameral parliament consists of the House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat) and the Senate (Dewan Negara), along a similar model to Westminster. The prime minister, as head of government, wields the greatest political power. The United Malays Nasional Party (UMNO) has dominated the political scene for more than 50 years.

In recent years, opposition to the UMNO's long-held policy of positively discriminating in favour of the majority ethnic-Malay population has grown. The results of a general election in March 2008 delivered a blow to the standing of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition. Although it continues to function as a majority government, it has been weakened and is increasingly divided. The opposition Pakatan Rakyat is an uneasy collection of ethnic and minority interest groups that are keen to reverse these policies and implement a wide-ranging reform programme, which would also encompass judicial reform and counter-corruption policies.

RULE OF LAW

The legal system is based on English law, but Sharia (Islamic law) is also used to varying extents in different states. There is considerable executive influence over the judiciary. There have been several instances of selective prosecution, as well as arbitrary and politically motivated verdicts. Individuals can be arrested without a warrant for certain offences and can be detained for 24 hours without charge. The Internal Security Act (ISA) grants sweeping power to the police and has been used to jail mainstream politicians, trade unionists, suspected communist activists and Islamist militants.

The police force has been accused of errors, omissions and transgressions, and is under the review of a royal commission. Any contact between foreign business executives and the police is likely to be with a relatively senior officer, all of whom speak English. They can be expected to be as helpful and courteous as the circumstances permit. However, traffic police sometimes ask for petty bribes and language difficulties can hamper contact with them. One area where the police are particularly strict is the possession of illegal drugs. Several foreigners have been executed for possessing even small quantities of heroin.

CORRUPTION

Corruption pervades the public services, especially the police force – around 65% of bribes are believed to involve traffic violations. Political corruption, bribery and cronyism are common in the ruling coalition. Former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's efforts to strengthen the Anti-Corruption Agency and to improve public sector governance through the Civil Service Ethics Training Institute showed initial promise, but have not been followed through. Although fresh pledges were made to resuscitate the reform agenda following elections in 2008, the electorate appears unconvinced.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Flooding and mudslides as a consequence of the rainy season are common between October and February.

BUSINESSWOMEN

The dominant Malay, Chinese and Indian cultures are ruled by what many in the West would consider 'traditional' values. These do not exclude women from the major ethnic groups from pursuing successful careers in business, but they do result in a male-dominated society.

Female executives should always dress appropriately for formal and informal meetings. A business suit with a skirt that covers the knees and a high-necked blouse is appropriate. Informally, a dress or trousers are suitable, but not shorts or skirts above the knee.

Foreign or European-looking women travelling alone, particularly in the rural areas of the more conservative Muslim states such as Kelantan and Terengganu, are at risk of unwanted male attention. However, most of this is bravado and there have been no serious incidents involving foreigners. One way of minimising such attention is to wear a bandanna as a minimal concession to the headscarf that most Muslim Malay women wear in such areas.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Most major international airlines have regularly scheduled flights to Kuala Lumpur, including Air India, Qantas (Australia), Cathay Pacific (Hong Kong), Japan Airlines, Thai Airways and Singapore Airlines. The national airline is Malaysia Airlines.

Main international airports

Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KUL) at Sepang is the main international gateway. Some international flights also go directly to Penang International Airport (PEN), Senai International Airport (JHB) serving Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu International Airport (BKI) and Kuching International Airport (KCH).

Airport security

Airports have a fair security record. Stricter security measures were introduced in the wake of terrorist attacks in the US in September 2001, with passenger carry-on luggage being manually searched as well as electronically scanned. Nevertheless, there have been several instances of unauthorised personnel entering secured areas and even of ground staff attempting to vandalise stationary aircraft.

By land

Malayan Railways operates a safe, but extremely slow rail service connecting Kuala Lumpur with Singapore in the south and Thailand in the north. Separatist violence in southern Thailand means that travellers should not attempt to cross the border from Malaysia by rail.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Nationals of the US, most Commonwealth countries, most European countries, Japan and South Korea do not need a visa for stays of up to three months. However, overstaying this period can result in large fines and even detention.

Visit passes issued for entry into peninsular Malaysia are not automatically valid for entry into the east Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. These states maintain their own immigration policies and will usually only issue one-month visas.

Travellers passing through immigration checkpoints (particularly when crossing the causeway from Singapore) should ensure that their passports have been properly stamped. Travellers have been obliged to pay large fines for allegedly entering the country illegally in cases where this has not been done correctly. Travellers should retain travel tickets in the event that their passports are not stamped on arrival because these can prove useful in dealings with immigration officials when departing the country.

Entry/Exit requirements

Travellers must hold a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry into the country. Travellers can carry only 1,000 ringgits (RM) in and out of the country. There is no limit on foreign currency.

Procedures

Customs and immigration officials are courteous and efficient. Visitors must fill out a Currency Declaration Form on arrival, on which they are required to declare the amount of ringgit notes that they are carrying. This form should be kept in the passport because it must be produced when leaving the country.

DEPARTURE TAX

The departure tax is usually included in the price of air tickets.

Myanmar

TRAVEL RISK

Travel is possible in many parts of Myanmar (Burma), but is restricted in some areas. Visitors should be aware of stringent security measures on foreigners, including surveillance and security checks. The northern Kachin Hills and the eastern Karen areas are home to armed domestic separatist groups. If travel to these areas is essential, extreme caution should be exercised.

A number of bombings have occurred in major cities including Yangon (Rangoon) and Mandalay in recent years, for which there has been no definitive attribution of responsibility. Crime levels are low because of the pervasive presence of the security forces. However, there are reports of foreign travellers being overcharged and cheated in taxis, restaurants and hotels. Travel conditions are often poor and access to petrol (gasoline) is not guaranteed in all areas.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Travel to border areas should be for essential purposes only due to the potential for conflict between rebel and government forces, and risks posed by drug-smuggling activity.
- Be aware that travel in some areas may be restricted by the authorities; seek itinerary-specific advice from your embassy prior to travel.
- It is preferable to prearrange to be met on arrival by a hotel representative or local contact.
- Rates of crime are low; take basic precautions against petty and street crime.
- Public transport is inefficient and uncomfortable, and may be unsafe; travel by public transport is not generally suitable for business travellers.
- Licensed taxis in Yangon (Rangoon) are safe for business travellers, but travellers unfamiliar with Myanmar (Burma) should use a private vehicle and driver.
- Use a private vehicle and driver for all travel outside Rangoon. Cross-country planning requires forward planning; road conditions are poor, and fuel supplies scarce in some areas. Seek itinerary-specific advice prior to cross-country travel.

- Be aware that occasional unattributed small-scale bomb attacks targeting the government and military are possible. These pose only incidental risk to foreigners.
- Avoid all demonstrations and strikes due to the credible risk of heavy-handed tactics by the security forces. Vacate the area immediately if protesters or a large group of security forces begins to gather. Return to your accommodation immediately and remain there until the situation stabilises.
- Comply fully with restrictions on movement and behaviour. Be alert to the heavy presence of security force personnel, and comply with their directives at all times.
- Be aware that foreigners perceived to be promoting democracy or aiding opposition groups risk detention and deportation or lengthy jail sentences.
- Avoid sensitive topics of discussion such as human rights and democratisation. Be aware that engaging local people in conversations on sensitive topics puts them at risk of trouble with the authorities.
- Exercise stringent information security protocols at all times; all communications and conversations are likely to be monitored.
- Be aware of the reputational risks associated with doing business in Burma.
- There is no independent means of recourse for companies or business personnel in the event of a dispute with the authorities.
- Be aware of the performance record of domestic airlines and consult travel agents regarding their suitability when making travel plans.

TERRORISM

Known separatist groups operating in Myanmar include the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), God's Army, the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), the Karen National Union (KNU), the Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors, the Shan State Army (SSN) and the National Coalition Government Union of Burma (NCGUB). The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), a separatist group fighting for an independent state for the Kachin people of the northern Kachin Hills, has negotiated ceasefires with the government, but remains armed. Eastern Myanmar is a stronghold of several ethnic-Karen (or Kayin) groups including the DKBA, God's Army, the KNPP and the KNU, which are fighting for a separate state for the community. Violence linked to the separatist insurgency is generally limited to rural and border areas and directed at the security forces. Foreigners are not directly targeted, but face a risk of exposure to incidental violence. There have been sporadic bombings over the years in Yangon; the junta usually blames dissident groups, including pro-democracy activists and ethnic separatist rebels, for such incidents, though disgruntled military or government operators could have been responsible.

CRIME

Due to the strong military regime, the threat of violent crime is very low. Human rights groups, however, accuse the military regime of severe crimes against the population.

Assaults are the most common form of violent crime in the country, followed by homicides and rapes. Nevertheless, official records show that violent crime is declining. Foreigners are rarely targeted.

SOCIAL UNREST

Protests and demonstrations are limited by the military junta's tight control of the populace. However, significant political protests do occur, exemplified by the demonstrations by opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) party members and activists in August 2007, and the monk-led protests of the following month. The detention of large numbers of demonstrators and the heavy-handed response of government troops prompted widespread international condemnation.

The authorities usually increase security in the run-up to the anniversaries of politically sensitive events. These include Martyr's Day on 19 July — that commemorates the assassination of pro-independence leaders, including NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi's father, Gen Aung San — and the student-led uprising on 8 August. Visitors should avoid making provocative political statements or gestures as foreigners have been arrested or deported for such behaviour. It is not advisable to attempt to engage strangers in conversation about controversial political matters while in public; this may get local people into trouble with the authorities.

Events of 8-8-88

Thousands of pro-democracy protesters marched through central Yangon on 8 August 1988, denouncing the military government of Gen Ne Win. Increasing to several hundred thousand in Mahabandoola Park, they were stopped by soldiers in front of the City Hall building and at several other areas in the city centre. More than 2,000 protesters were believed to have been killed during the ensuing crackdown. In 1998, more than 6,000 pro-democracy protesters were killed in the capital during protests marking the 10th anniversary of 8/8/88.

2007 protests

In August 2007, the government considerably raised the price of fuel and consumer goods and this triggered small public demonstrations. A larger pro-democracy movement led by Buddhist monks in September 2007 arose from these initial protests. The monks rallied peacefully against the junta government and encouraged the public to participate. After initial inaction by the military, the growing number of demonstrators (protests swelled to approximately 100,000) subsequently prompted a crackdown that resulted in the death of at least ten people and the arrest of 1,000 others. The government reportedly continued to make arrests after the rallies had subsided.

CONFLICT

The military junta has addressed two major insurgent threats. The first comes from the KIO, who inhabit the Kachin Hills in the north of Burma/Myanmar and is leading an armed struggle for a separate state for the Kachin ethnic community. Although the government managed to negotiate a ceasefire with the group in 1993 and the KIO has stopped its attacks against the government, it remains armed and is involved in drug-trafficking. The second persistent threat comes from militant Karen organisations fighting for an independent Karen state.

The issue of Rohingyas (Muslim refugees) complicates Bangladesh's relationship with Burma/Myanmar. The exodus of this group began in 1992 when around 250,000 people fled the country in the face of persecution by the military government. Bangladesh has slowly set up a number of camps for these individuals, and receives help from the UNHCR and World Food Programme to support the group. Prospects for their repatriation are limited. In addition, a longstanding maritime boundary dispute gained a new geopolitical dimension with the discovery of extensive gas reserves in the area. In 2006 Bangladesh claimed that Burma/Myanmar had penetrated 7,000 square miles (18,000 sq.km) into Bangladeshi waters to engage in gas exploitation. In spite of mutual declarations of goodwill to settle the issue and refrain from intrusion into the disputed waters, tensions further escalated when Bangladesh in November 2008 accused Burma/Myanmar of once again encroaching into its waters. Neither country has so far filed a claim to the UN, but may adopt this course in the future.

Tensions along the Thai border may also flare periodically, when supporters of the military regime carry out operations against opposition Burmese camps or guerrilla bases, causing the Thai military to occasionally retaliate. However, such clashes have become more infrequent since 2003, as relations between the Burmese and Thai governments have improved.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Political instability

Myanmar has faced political instability since it gained independence in 1948 due to the desire of many of its ethnic minorities for independence. The present military junta was installed after a coup in 1962 that ousted democratically elected Prime Minister U Nu, while military leader Gen Ne Win took control of the country. The military regime also arrested the democratically elected leader of the NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi, in 1989 before she won the 1990 elections. The country is being ruled by Gen Than Shwe, who is Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Recent events suggest that there were divisions in the government following the September 2007 unrest, when exiles reported there was an emerging split in the ruling junta over the violent action taken against the monks and civilians. There is the possibility of political instability if General Than Shwe, the senior-most leader of the junta were to resign.

RULE OF LAW

The ruling military regime exercises pervasive control over the population. The economy and the media are highly regulated. Key industries, as well as major broadcasters and publications, are all under government control. The armed forces conduct military operations against insurgents and relocate thousands of civilians.

Those most affected by government military operations are the Shan and Karen ethnic minorities in the north-east along the border with Thailand. Karenni, Tavoyan and Mon ethnic minorities are also targeted by the government.

Foreigners perceived to be in the country to promote democracy, provide unofficial aid or to assist opposition groups, risk detention and deportation. All those openly opposed to the present military government risk lengthy jail sentences.

CORRUPTION

Myanmar has a dominant and ubiquitous black market and public enterprises are operated by corrupt military officials. The military government is also reported to be involved in drug-trafficking and forced labour. Business travellers and expatriates may be subject to illicit payments and informal fees to access government services.

NATURAL DISASTERS

In May 2008, Typhoon Nargis devastated the southern region of the country, especially the Yangon division and Irrawaddy Delta region. Official figures indicated that more than 84,537 people had been killed and another 53,836 people went missing. Aid efforts were severely hampered by government obstruction, including refusing entry to foreign aid workers and stopping aid distribution. Electricity, water, sanitation and communication were heavily disrupted in many areas.

In December 2004, the country was hit by a tsunami that resulted from the 9.0 magnitude earthquake off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The tsunami killed at least 60 people, injured more than 40 others and damaged property.

Myanmar has experienced several severe floods since 2000. The northern state of Kachin, the central Mandalay division and the southern division of Irrawaddy were the worst affected during flooding in July-August 2007.

BUSINESSWOMEN

Female personnel in Yangon do not face any additional security risks, but should observe basic security precautions as they would in any other major cities.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Thai Airways connect Rangoon with Bangkok (Thailand), while Malaysia Airlines flies to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). SilkAir flies a route to Singapore and Air China maintains a connection with Beijing (China). State-owned Myanmar Airlines International (MAI) has a poor safety record.

Main international airports

Yangon International Airport is the main gateway in Burma. There is a second international airport in Mandalay.

By land

Overland travel for foreigners is severely restricted and should be avoided.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

As of 1 May 2010, there is a visa-on-arrival system at the Yangon airport; the fee is 30 US dollars and each applicant's name will be checked against a government blacklist before being approved. For travellers that have obtained business or other types of visas in advance, the visa forms that are attached to the passport must be retained as these need to be handed in at immigration. An immigration card and customs declaration, which will be given during the flight, must also be filled out and handed in.

Entry/Exit requirements

All travellers require a passport and visa. Personnel should ensure that their passport is valid for at least six months before travelling.

Customs officials may confiscate literature, such as international magazines, that is not deemed suitable. Visitors are no longer required to convert \$200 into foreign exchange certificates (FEC) at the lowest official rate.

DEPARTURE TAX

- Departure tax for foreigners is \$10; officials may attempt to force passengers to pay with a large denomination note and accept change, as they get a better exchange rate for large denomination notes. If paying this in kyats, foreign personnel will be forced to accept a discounted exchange rate.
- Burmese nationals must pay 3,000 kyats or \$3.

Philippines

TRAVEL RISK

In most areas of the country, crime poses the greatest risk to visitors. The risk of a visitor being a victim of crime is slightly greater in Metro Manila. Banditry is a problem in rural areas, though the line between insurgency and criminal banditry is frequently blurred. The communist New People's Army (NPA) operates with varying levels of impunity throughout most of the country. There is a high risk of opportunistic kidnap and banditry, in rural areas of southern and western Mindanao, where Muslim separatist guerrillas are active.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Avoid all travel to Basilan and the Sulu Archipelago due to risks posed by insurgent and associated criminal activity. Travel to most of Mindanao is viable

but travel to areas of insurgency in south-western Mindanao should be for essential purposes only.

- Avoid non-essential cross-country travel due to risks posed by banditry, and poor driving standards and road conditions. When undertaking essential road travel, do not self-drive; use an experienced and trusted local driver and ensure your vehicle is in good condition. Take precautions against car-jacking and avoid high-risk areas.
- High rates of crime pose a significant risk to travellers. Exercise heightened caution and stringent security measures at all times and in all areas. Accommodation and transport decisions should be made with attention to the risks posed by crime.
- Be aware confidence tricksters may target foreigners. Be wary of strangers and their motives, and do not accept food or drink from unidentified or recently met persons.
- Opportunistic kidnap-for-ransom remains a threat, particularly in Mindanao. Avoid ostentatious displays of wealth, and be aware that kidnappers may pose as police officers; be particularly vigilant at roadblocks and during stop-checks. Expatriates are advised to vary routines, choose a modest model of vehicle and maintain vigilance for signs of surveillance.
- Criminals are commonly armed; if targeted, avoid doing anything to resist or antagonise your assailant.
- There is a credible risk of attack by either domestic or transnational terrorists. Government personnel and buildings, military personnel and facilities, public transport and crowded shopping and entertainment venues are likely targets. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Personnel should avoid demonstrations and rallies; clashes with the security forces, although uncommon, quickly become extremely dangerous. Vacate the area immediately if a large crowd or concentration of the security forces begins to develop.
- Travel by bus, jeepney, ferry and rail is not suitable for business travellers. Use only a private vehicle and driver or taxis arranged through your hotel or local colleague. If attending meetings away from your hotel, pre-book return transport before your departure.
- Be aware of the performance record of domestic airlines and consult travel agents regarding their suitability when making travel plans.

The above advice is not exhaustive; seek itinerary-specific advice prior to travel in Philippines.

CRIME

Crime, rather than political violence, poses the main day-to-day risk to business travellers. Petty crime such as pick pocketing and purse-snatching is common in the entertainment and public areas in all major cities, while car theft and carjacking can occur anywhere. Firearms are readily available on the streets and most businesses, hotels and banks employ armed guards. In the event of a robbery attempt, the victim should always assume that the perpetrator is armed and be prepared to comply with all instructions to hand over money or other possessions. Korean and Japanese nationals have been targeted in violent crime by business rivals.

Credit card fraud is common and so are confidence games and scams. It is important that personnel do not allow their cards to be removed from sight while making purchases, and withdraw cash from ATMs (cash machines) located in reputable banks. Incidents of opportunistic crime tend to become more frequent during festivals and holidays. There are reports of tourists having been drugged through their drinks or food, resulting in them being robbed while rendered unconscious in Manila, including the Makati CBD, and in resort towns.

SOCIAL UNREST

Protests and strikes are a common feature of life in many urban areas, including in the Metro Manila region, Cebu and Bicol. Rallies are generally non-violent, if noisy, and often disrupt traffic and other essential services. Agricultural groups, transport unions and workers in other sectors since early 2008 have staged frequent demonstrations and strikes over the rising prices of essential commodities and to express opposition to government policies. The country has also witnessed several protests against constitutional amendments proposed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which many perceive to be an attempt to extend her term in office.

Violence does occasionally occur during political events. As many as 40,000 opposition protesters in July-August 2005 clashed with the police during nearly daily demonstrations against Macapagal-Arroyo in central Manila. In November 2009, at least 46 people, including local politicians, lawyers and journalists, were kidnapped and killed in the southern province of Maguinadanao as a result of political rivalry; a state of emergency was declared in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and in Cotabato City (Mindanao island). All foreign visitors are strongly advised to avoid any area that is affected by protests, as well as locations where the security forces congregate.

TERRORISM

Several terrorist groups operate in the Philippines. Some are motivated by a communist or Islamist ideology, while others claim to share these ideologies but are more driven by criminal objectives, such as extorting businesses or staging kidnaps-for-ransom. The risk of terrorist attacks increases during military operations against Islamist militants in the south. While bomb attacks at shopping centres (malls) and public places are relatively common in larger cities in Mindanao, attacks in Manila are less frequent.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

The MILF has been fighting a separatist insurgency for nearly four decades. It operates in remote areas in Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte provinces. There is also a MILF presence in Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay provinces. Some MILF field commands are known to be actively involved in banditry and extortion.

There are indications that the MILF has links to the regional Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist network. A government-MILF memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain was set to be signed on 4 August 2008 but was aborted by the Supreme Court, acting on the petition of local government officials in Mindanao who requested a temporary restraining order. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in September 2008 dissolved the

government's peace panel with the MILF, indicating a new peace panel would be formed if MILF abides by the ceasefire agreement and hands over two rogue field commanders.

New People's Army (NPA)

The NPA is the military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and was formed in 1969 to overthrow the government through protracted guerrilla warfare. While the NPA operates nationwide, the group is mostly concentrated in the Bicol and Caraga regions, Negros Occidental and Samar provinces and Southern Mindanao. It attacks telecommunications towers, power lines and corporate/mining infrastructure to pressure companies into paying the 'revolutionary tax' it levies. The group opposes perceived US involvement in domestic issues and actively protests against US military exercises.

Abu Sayyaf

The group espouses radical Islamist internationalism and has hosted al-Qaida members. It is an ethnic-Tausug pirate gang, piracy having a long history in the group's stronghold of Basilan and Jolo in Sulu Archipelago. While the group's operational and logistical capability has been constrained by US-backed anti-terrorist operations, it retains capabilities to stage attacks through small cells or individuals. The group has kidnapped tourists and workers from resorts in Palawan province and Sabah in Malaysia.

Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM)

The RSM of Christian converts to Islam was formed in 2002 and there is increasing evidence of links with the Abu Sayyaf. The alliance with the RSM has increased the Abu Sayyaf's ability to stage terrorist attacks outside its southern strongholds. There now appears to be little doubt that the February 2004 sinking of Superferry 14 in Manila Bay that killed 116 people was ordered by the Abu Sayyaf but carried out by RSM members.

Other insurgent groups

Some groups function as front organisations representing different interests such as labour, transport and women. Some groups maintain modest armed units and their areas of operations are usually limited to rural areas.

KIDNAPPING

Ethnic-Chinese Filipino nationals were previously considered the more favoured target of kidnapers, though gangs have started to target foreign nationals, particularly Indian moneylenders. A local kidnap gang calling itself 'Pentagon' is believed to have abducted at least 50 people since 2001. Recently in February-May 2009, a female Filipino-Chinese trader was abducted in Maguindanao province, while three others, including a Chinese woman, were kidnapped in Cotabato province. All four were released by Pentagon following negotiations.

In southern Philippines, groups such as the Abu Sayyaf have married radical Islamist ideology with a long history of organised crime to develop a type of kidnapping that is best described as 'criminal terrorism' – kidnap of both locals and foreigners, apparently on politico-religious grounds, but coupled with a willingness to release captives in

exchange for significant ransom payments. Two foreign and one local employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as well as a Sri Lankan peace activist, were abducted by Abu Sayyaf militants on the island of Jolo (Sulu archipelago) in January-March 2009. The group demanded the withdrawal of military units from the area in exchange for the captives' freedom. All four have since been released; however, hostages have sometimes been executed by their captors in previous incidents. Kidnap-for-ransom involving foreigners is of most concern in the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Basilan and Sulu and the city of Zamboanga (Mindanao). A Swiss-Filipino businessman was kidnapped in April 2010 in Zamboanga: his captors demanded a ransom for his release.

CONFLICT

The Philippines is among six Asian countries that claim the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea – the others are China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei. Disputes among these six parties have led to various minor military skirmishes, the detention of fishermen and diplomatic rows. Representatives of the Philippines, China and other claimant countries in September 2003 signed a declaration of peace to promote the development of the resources in the disputed islands.

Security is poor in rural areas where communist guerrillas, Islamist separatists and bandits operate. Islamist separatists continue to mount periodic attacks on government and official targets and Christian-dominated areas in south-west Mindanao.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The Philippines is a democratic republic with an elected president, an elected bicameral legislature and a fractious multi-party system. The president heads the executive branch of government and can serve for a single six-year term. The president's executive powers are constrained by constitutional safeguards. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is the only region that has its own government. The ARMM is composed of the five predominantly Muslim provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawa-Tawi, as well as the city of Marawi. The Philippines is administratively divided into 79 provinces and 115 chartered cities. Provinces are further sub-divided into districts, municipalities and villages.

Reform initiatives are often thwarted by the system of checks and balances that have been designed to prevent a return to dictatorship. Politics are characterised by personalities rather than policies. Despite a lacklustre record as a senator and congressman, Benigno Aquino III was inaugurated the country's 15th president on 30 June 2010, replacing Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, whose term was riddled with allegations of corruption. Aquino's father, former senator Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino was assassinated in 1983, triggering protests that ended the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-86). His mother, Corazon 'Cory' Aquino, who led the People Power Revolution that ousted Marcos, served as president for six years (1986-92).

RULE OF LAW

The legal system is modeled on US common law. The constitution was written in 1987; it embodies a number of principles regarding human rights and social justice that were

intended to re-establish popular confidence in and respect for the judiciary. Nevertheless, the judiciary is known to be corrupt and most of the convicted are poor as the wealthy pay bribes to avoid punishments. The proliferation of illegal drugs further compounds corruption problems and there is a clearly established nexus between drug smugglers, the police and government officials.

Junior police officers are generally unreliable and of little help to foreign business visitors, though circumstances may mean that personnel have to contact or have other dealings with them. Where possible, the visitor should ask to see a senior officer, who will at least be more likely to speak good English. The police are not well regarded locally; the professional and middle classes generally consider them corrupt and incompetent.

CORRUPTION

Official initiatives to curb the widespread corruption at lower bureaucratic levels of the police force and numerous government agencies have not yielded much success. The majority of corrupt activities – and the form that business travellers would be most likely to encounter – involve small payments that entice officials to overlook minor offences, allow the briber to expedite their objectives or to ‘facilitate’ the completion of services that the department is meant to deal with as its duty. Corruption is endemic in society and visitors staying in the country for extended periods of time or on repeated occasions are very likely to be faced with the need to offer payments to speed up normal transactions.

NATURAL DISASTERS

The country is prone to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons and floods. In January 2009, floods and landslides caused by incessant rains killed at least 39 people and displaced about 200,000 others in several provinces of northern Mindanao and the eastern Visayas; the flooding also caused severe damage to vital infrastructure in the region.

A series of typhoons struck the country in November 2007. Typhoon Kabayan killed six people and destroyed property in northern Luzon Island, while Typhoon Lando struck the Visayas and Mindanao islands, killing ten people and causing damages estimated to be worth more than \$1.5m.

The country has several active volcanoes. Mount Mayon in central Albay province, which is a popular tourist destination, and Mount Pinatubo on Luzon Island are the most active. Mount Mayon's last eruption was in July 2006. Mudflows also regularly sweep through the 40 ravines that radiate from the summit and destroy populated lowland areas. Extensive deforestation has also been blamed for annual heavy flooding and landslides in several areas.

BUSINESSWOMEN

There are no particular hazards for women visitors (the high crime rate is equally likely to affect male travellers) other than those caused by misunderstandings.

Some general precautions will further reduce any threats to an individual's security. Women travellers are advised to observe the following precautions:

- Ensure that room numbers remain confidential. This includes not publicly displaying the room key tag and emphasising that the room number should not be given to any inquirers.
- Insist on a room with a key-chain, deadlock and spy-hole.
- Book a suite on an executive floor if business meetings are planned in the hotel.

Male Filipinos are generally courteous and attentive. Local women are involved in business at all levels and foreign women in business should not attract undue attention. However, it is important for a foreign female executive to retain a degree of distance in the face of what can either be an overly 'macho' or solicitous Filipino approach.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

The Philippines is served by around 30 international and regional airlines. Philippine Airlines (PAL) is the national carrier and provides services to 29 international and 19 domestic destinations. Most business travellers choose to use larger international airlines where possible.

Main international airports

There are two points of entry for scheduled international flights into the Philippines: Manila (Ninoy Aquino International Airport - MNL) and Cebu (Mactan International Airport - CEB). The terminal at MNL is old and congested but has shops and some bank outlets for forex transactions. The main hubs are MNL and, about half a mile (1km) away, Manila Domestic Airport.

Airport security

Security procedures at airports are not particularly efficient but are adequate. Search and checking procedures are both labour- and technology-intensive, and it is advisable to reach the airport well ahead of the check-in time on international flights (particularly to the US). Criminal theft and deception around the airport pose a routine threat for foreign business travellers. No local groups pose a specific terrorist threat.

Airport procedures

Immigration procedures are usually brief, though the authorities have become stricter about visa requirements. If entering with a tourist or business visa, which for most nationalities is stamped on arrival, visitors must have an onward ticket to show that they intend to leave. On both arrival and departure, visitors are required to complete a customs and immigration form, which can cause delays. During health scares, such as the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), passengers have been obliged to undergo temperature testing. The policy is likely to be revived in the event of a flu pandemic.

Passports and airline tickets must be shown to gain entry to the departure hall. All hand baggage is checked. After check-in, travellers pass through a police checkpoint where tickets, passports and boarding passes are examined. Cabin luggage receives a second X-ray screening before passing into the departure lounge. Business visitors are advised to use the hotel limousine service at NAIA that operates from immediately in front of the arrivals terminal.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Visas for most visitors are available on arrival and last for an initial period of 21 days. Visas can be extended for two months for every extension, up to a period of one year, by applying to the Visa Extension Section at the Bureau of Immigration in Manila. Beginning August 2009, Chinese nationals who travel to certain developed countries (US, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the EU) frequently, are allowed visa-free travel for stays of up to seven days. Entry may be refused to anyone carrying a passport with less than six months validity or without an onward or return air ticket. Overstaying without the proper authority can lead to fines and detention.

DEPARTURE TAX

A 750-peso (\$16) departure tax, inclusive of a 200-peso (\$4) security tax is levied on all passengers departing on international flights (except Overseas Filipino Workers), payable in pesos or US dollars. Domestic departure tax is 200 pesos and payable only in local currency only.

Taiwan

Risk Summary

NOTE

Taiwan is a disputed territory. In most respects it has *de facto* independence from China (the People's Republic of China (PRC) or 'mainland China'), and is effectively self-governed as the Republic of China (ROC). However, it does not have *de jure* independence, is not recognised as a sovereign state by the UN or most major nations, and has formal diplomatic relations only with a small number of minor countries. China considers Taiwan a 'renegade' province of the PRC, and insists on the 'one China' principle: that there is only one China, of which Taiwan is an integral and inalienable part.

TRAVEL RISK

Petty crime is the problem that foreign business visitors are most likely to face. Protests and demonstrations are normally peaceful but occasionally end in clashes with riot police. Periodic surges of anti-Chinese or anti-Japanese sentiment very rarely provoke harassment of individual foreign visitors. The problems that most travellers encounter are language-related, as English is not widely spoken and misunderstandings are frequent. Taiwan lies in an active earthquake zone and earthquakes are a common

occurrence. The island periodically experiences localised flooding and landslides associated with heavy rain fall during the typhoon season.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Take basic security precautions against petty and street crime.
- Be aware of the performance record of Taiwanese commercial airlines and consult travel agents regarding the suitability of domestic airlines when making travel plans.

CRIME

Crime levels remain low compared with most Western cities and even China. While violent crime is generally rare, the number of muggings and sexual assaults has recently increased. Foreign business personnel should take commonsense precautions against crime, such as remaining in well-lit areas at night and avoiding overt displays of wealth.

SOCIAL UNREST

Protests, most of which are held in the capital Taipei, are relatively common and often well attended; rallies that followed the disputed results of a presidential election in 2004 attracted hundreds of thousands of participants. The thawing of relations with China, which followed the election of Nationalist Party (KMT) candidate Ma Ying-jeou in March 2008, resulted in large-scale reactionary anti-Ma protests, which paralysed sections of Taipei on a few occasions in October-November 2008. Some isolated incidents of violence accompanied rallies that were held to denounce the visit of a Chinese envoy in early November 2008. Separately, a decision by the government to lift a ban on US beef imports triggered several protests in Taipei in November 2009.

Demonstrations are often boisterous and disruptive, but most pass off peacefully. On occasion, rallies degenerate into clashes between opposing groups of protesters or between demonstrators and the security forces; agents provocateurs are thought to instigate clashes at some political protests. One such protest in June 2009 turned violent after the police and supporters of former president Chen Shui-bian clashed in front of the District Court in Taipei during Chen's trial for alleged corruption. Visitors should avoid all such gatherings to mitigate the risk of being incidentally affected by violence. Flashpoint issues include the warming of relations with China, environmental issues, domestic politics, perceived government corruption and certain territorial disputes with Japan. Rallies related to disputes with Japan are normally staged outside the Japan Interchange Association in Taipei.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping poses an insignificant risk for foreigners. There are periodic reports of kidnap-for-ransom by criminal gangs, though such incidents almost always affect wealthy Taiwanese personnel.

TERRORISM

No local terrorist organisations are known to be operational in Taiwan. The country has no history of Islamist terrorism; the risk that the country would be targeted by transnational groups is insignificant and further reduced by increased police surveillance since 2001. There have been periodic claims that mainland Chinese agents may plan attacks aimed at destabilising Taiwan, but there is no solid evidence to support these statements.

However, small-scale bombings have occurred sporadically in Taipei. These attacks have been linked to domestic political or economic issues. Between November 2003 and November 2004, the 'rice bomber', who was attempting to draw government attention to the plight of local farmers, planted 17 small devices around Taipei, of which two exploded, causing only minor damage and no injury. In December 2004, on the last day of campaigning before legislative elections, a bomb exploded at a Taipei railway station causing minor damage to cars. Further small-scale and isolated attacks by radical individuals are possible, but the risk to foreign visitors and expatriates is low and indirect.

CONFLICT

Although Taiwan's relations with China remain strained and despite its increasing defence budgets, an all-out war between the two states or between the US and China over Taiwan is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Tension is likely to arise in domestic politics between pro-China groups and pro-independence parties.

The Paracel Islands, currently administered by China, are claimed by Taiwan, as are the Tiaooyutai islands (Senakaku in Japanese), which are administered by Japan. A Taiwanese fishing trawler and a Japanese patrol ship in June 2008 collided near Senakaku, sparking a minor diplomatic incident. Nevertheless, relations with Japan are generally good.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Taiwan has a democratic parliamentary political system; elections for the Legislative Yuan (legislature) are held every three years. The government is led by a president who is directly elected every four years. The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) party won a majority in the 2008 elections, while Ma Ying-jeou became president in May 2008. The democratic system is essentially stable, as evidenced by the transfer of power through elections, though politics is often confrontational. A close result in the 2008 presidential vote led to a series of protests that drew hundreds of thousands of participants.

Taiwan is officially known as the Republic of China (ROC). It has only been recognised by around 20 states, though it has good informal relations with around 150 others, and a strong relationship with the US. Political debate is dominated by Taiwan's relationship with China. Domestic political parties fall into two camps: the 'pan-blues' (the KMT, PFP and New Party) who favour increasing ties with the mainland, and the 'pan-greens' who argue for greater independence.

RULE OF LAW

The Judicial Yuan is the highest court in the land. Its chief functions are to interpret the constitution and adjudicate in civil, criminal and administrative cases, as well as cases concerning disciplinary sanctions of public functionaries. The subordinate units of the Judicial Yuan are the Supreme and High Courts. The district courts hear civil and criminal cases. Verdicts are decided by judges; there is no jury trial system.

The national police and security agencies are under civilian control. The police are reasonably efficient, though corruption exists at lower levels. Police officers are generally cooperative and are used to dealing with foreigners. Most high-ranking officers speak some English, but the majority of other officers do not. As a result, it is advisable to let local colleagues deal with the police where possible. Police reports are often optional in Taiwan, and insisting that one is drawn up will ensure that a complaint is taken seriously.

CORRUPTION

Corruption appears to be a more serious problem in local government offices than in the national government. The majority of visitors would never be affected by it; foreign business personnel rarely encounter requests for facilitation payments. The systemic importance of relationships (*guanxi*) and favouritism is, however, quite common at all levels of government and business.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Taiwan's typhoon season occurs between June and September. During these periods, the island may experience localised flooding and landslides associated with heavy rainfall. Taiwan is susceptible to earthquakes and experiences frequent tremors, due to its location on a seismically active stretch of the Pacific Basin.

BUSINESSWOMEN

Taiwan presents few serious problems for businesswomen. However, there have been incidents of local women being raped or robbed by taxi drivers, usually at night. Businesswomen are advised not to take taxis on their own late at night. If this is unavoidable, they should have a friend write down the taxi's licence plate number before entering the vehicle and make clear to the driver that they have done this.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Most business travellers will arrive at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (TPE) near the city of Taoyuan, south-west of Taipei. Travellers from some Asian destinations can arrive in Taiwan at Kaohsiung International Airport (KHH) in the south of the island. A significant number of international airlines serve Taiwan. However, Taiwan is not a regional transport hub along the lines of Singapore and Hong Kong, so onward flights to third countries are occasionally a problem. Direct flights between China and Taiwan were re-started in August 2009, after a nearly 60-year break. Security is low-key but good.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

A business visa can be obtained before departure from one of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices (TECO) that serve as de facto embassies in countries that do not recognise the Republic of China as a sovereign state. Evidence of travel to mainland China and Hong Kong does not compromise the traveller's chances of being issued a visa. Taiwan offers a visa-free stay of 30 days for the nationals of most Western countries and Japan. There are some restrictions on activities that may be conducted in Taiwan during this period and business travellers should inquire at their home country TECO before departure. In July 2009, Taiwan eased visa regulations for businessmen from Iran, Iraq and Bangladesh who will no longer need to obtain a guarantee from a Taiwanese company and will be allowed to apply for visa at any of Taiwan's overseas representative offices. Taiwan in 2003 had imposed strict visa rules on prospective visitors from 19 countries, including Pakistan, Myanmar (Burma), Nigeria and the aforementioned three countries.

The most typical visa granted to a short- to medium-term business traveller to Taiwan is a single-entry two-month extendable visa, which will provide the recipient with up to 180 days of legal residency. Supporting documentation will be required to apply for this visa, including evidence of business contacts on the island. Frequent business travellers to Taiwan may apply for a multiple-entry version of the same visa, but documentary evidence of a continuing need to return to Taiwan is required. Long-term business travellers can apply for a single-entry temporary resident visa, which allows the recipient to reside in Taiwan for 12 months. A contract of employment from a registered public company, work permit and health check are required to secure this visa.

Entry/Exit requirements

There are no specific entry requirements.

DEPARTURE TAX

There is a departure tax of NT\$300, but it is usually included in the price of the ticket.

Thailand

TRAVEL RISK

Petty crime presents a risk in many areas, particularly the capital Bangkok. Crime targeting foreigners is above the national average in the coastal resort of Pattaya and, to a lesser extent, on the tourist islands of Phuket and Koh Samui. An insurgency in the three southern Muslim-majority provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani that has led to regular violent attacks shows no sign of abating. Fighting between government troops

from Myanmar (Burma) and guerrilla groups periodically spills over into the border area with Thailand, especially during the dry season (October to mid-May). Smuggling gangs operate in the Laos border area and banditry is a problem in the vicinity of the Cambodian border.

Large protests (both pro- and anti-government) are common during periods of political instability and uncertainty, especially in Bangkok. While most remain relatively peaceful, clashes with the security forces have resulted in casualties and significant disruption. Suspected Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members were arrested in Thailand in 2003, including the group's suspected operations chief, Riduan Isamuddin (alias Hambali). A terrorist attack outside the country's insurgent-affected southern provinces cannot be ruled out, particularly given the country's popularity with Western tourists. However, bomb attacks in Bangkok in December 2006 that killed three people did not appear to have deliberately targeted foreigners.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Travel to the southern provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani and the southern districts of Songkhla province should be for essential purposes only, due to risks posed by escalating insurgency.
- Travel to remote border areas with Burma, Laos and Cambodia should be for essential purposes only. Smuggling gangs operate on all borders and the Cambodian border region remains unsettled, with risks posed by banditry. Occasional and localised clashes between Burmese rebel guerrillas and Burmese government troops overspill into Thailand, particularly during the dry season. Essential travel to these areas should only be undertaken with a coordinated security plan, and after seeking itinerary-specific advice.
- Take sensible security precautions against petty and street crime.
- Be aware that confidence tricksters may target foreigners. Be informed of common minor scams, and be wary of strangers and their motives. Do not accept food or drink from strangers.
- Avoid all demonstrations, rallies and protests because of a credible risk of security incidents. In the event of encountering protest activity, vacate the area; do not stop to watch or photograph demonstrators.
- Be aware that large protests have the potential to cause extensive and prolonged disruption at times of political instability and uncertainty, and may render movement difficult or impossible. Monitor developments for signs of rising tensions prior to and during your stay.
- Road conditions are variable and driving standards are poor; do not self-drive unless very familiar with local conditions. Taxis are a suitable means of transport for business travellers.

CRIME

Thailand is a leading Asian business and tourist destination and is generally perceived to be relatively safe. Violent crime, including armed robbery involving foreigners, is rare, though extortion – and sometimes kidnapping – can be a problem for expatriate businessmen. Most incidents of violence against foreigners result from personal disputes, involvement with criminal groups and involvement with the sex industry. Petty crime,

such as pick pocketing and bag-snatching, can be a hazard in many areas, particularly Bangkok.

There is a high risk of credit card fraud in Thailand, with increasing reports of criminal groups using electronic devices to extract information from the magnetic strip of credit cards and placing cameras at automated teller machines (ATMs) to record PIN details. Foreigners can be targeted for petty, opportunistic crime such as purse-snatching, pick pocketing and residential theft, though there have been isolated cases of assault and murder.

Foreigners can be targeted by criminals in scams involving 'free guides'. Such guides usually direct victims to gemstone dealers, who overcharge for inferior quality stones, or to disreputable establishments in 'red light' districts, in which exorbitant cover charges and drink prices apply. Extortion scams at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport have also been reported with travellers falsely accused of shoplifting at the King Power duty-free store. Individuals should always be alert to their surroundings and secure their possessions when visiting or transiting the various retail outlets. Always make sure that the items in the bag are the ones stated on the receipt.

Foreigners should ensure that they remain alert and aware of their surroundings when visiting entertainment venues, where drink spiking and subsequent robbery can be a problem. Drug trafficking is rampant in the northern 'Golden Triangle' but poses no direct threat to foreigners. There is a risk of banditry in the vicinity of the Cambodian border.

SOCIAL UNREST

Large protests (both pro- and anti-government) are common during periods of political instability and uncertainty, especially in Bangkok. While such events are usually more peaceful and orderly than those that take place in neighbouring countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia, they can be disruptive and occasionally degenerate into clashes. Prominent venues where protesters tend to gather include the parliament building on Ratchadamnoen Nok Road, Sanam Luang park (adjacent to the Royal Palace) and Government House. Foreign visitors are reminded to avoid all demonstrations and rallies as a routine security precaution, even if they appear peaceful.

In August and September 2008, confrontations between supporters of the People's Power Party (PPP)-led government and opposition People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) activists prompted a declaration of state of emergency in Bangkok. Further violence occurred in October that year when the police moved to disperse protesters using tear gas; two people were killed and nearly 400 injured. While the demonstrations were mostly contained within certain parts of the capital, they eventually had a direct effect on business travellers when the PAD late in November besieged the capital's airports in an effort to force then prime minister Somchai Wongsawat to resign. The PAD ended its protests on 2 December 2008 after a constitutional court banned the PPP and Somchai announced that he would not re-enter politics.

Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Democrat Party (DP) replaced Somchai as premier following a parliamentary vote. However, the opposition United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), an affiliate of the Puea Thai party (which was established by former PPP members), has continued to stage protests against Abhisit's administration to

demand fresh elections. In May 2010, a military operation was launched to end a nearly two-month-long anti-government campaign that included the occupation of Bangkok's central commercial district by UDD supporters; at least 89 people, mainly civilians, were killed and nearly 2,000 others injured during the clashes, which also prompted the government to declare a state of emergency in Bangkok and several provinces. The underlying issues and grievances remain unresolved and are likely to result in further unrest.

CONFLICT

Southern insurgency

The predominantly Muslim southern provinces have a long history of insurrection by separatists that consider the annexation of the Muslim south by the Buddhist kingdom illegal. Muslims in southern provinces have complained of discrimination by the predominantly Buddhist population. After a few years of relative calm, levels of violence have increased significantly since 2004. Martial law remains in effect in the southern provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, and the Thepha, Chana, Na Thawi, Saba Yoi and Sadao districts of Songkhla province.

Preah Vihear temple/Tensions with Cambodia

Tensions in July-October 2008 escalated between Thailand and Cambodia related to the issue of sovereignty over the ancient ruins of the Preah Vihear temple site, which is situated in the countries' shared border region. Each side has deployed a military garrison to the site, and sporadic clashes have resulted in some casualties on both sides. The continuing stand-off is expected to remain a flashpoint, but is very unlikely to deteriorate into major combat.

Thai-Lao border

Travellers should be aware that there are occasional clashes on Thailand's northern border with Laos in connection with attempts by ethnic Hmong insurgents to enter Thai territory. In July 2000, five people were killed and several fled to Thailand during a skirmish between Lao insurgents and government forces in Laos near the Chong Mek border crossing. Additionally, two US citizens in 1999 and one in early 2000 were reported missing after attempting to cross into Laos at the Lao-Thai border.

Thai-Burma border

Incursions by supporters of the military regime in Burma against opposition Burmese camps or guerrilla bases in the Thai border region can result in clashes and retaliation by the Thai military, though clashes have become more infrequent since 2003 as relations between the Burmese and Thai governments have improved.

TERRORISM

There is continuing insecurity in the provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, which remain under a state of emergency, and the southern areas of Songkhla province. Terrorist attacks in these regions take the form of bombings and assassinations. While most

attacks are concentrated on government, military or Buddhist targets, public transport, marketplaces and hotels are occasionally targeted. Although the operational capabilities of the al-Qaida affiliated Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) have been degraded, it continues to have the capability to launch terrorist attacks and remains a significant threat.

While most terrorist attacks occur in the south, Bangkok has also experienced several bomb explosions in recent years. Several small bombs were set off around Bangkok in January, May and December 2007, but they caused no injuries and only minor damage. These devices were located near government and military buildings, political party offices, press buildings and in hotel car parks (parking lots). It appears that the bombs were not intended to cause major death or destruction. Southern separatist groups denied responsibility for the attacks. Previously, a series of bombs exploded in Bangkok in December 2006, killing three people and injuring 42 others, including several foreign tourists.

KIDNAPPING

Cases of kidnapping remain quite rare. Incidents usually involve locals, though there have been sporadic reports of foreign nationals being targeted. Official statistics may understate the frequency of such crimes, as many kidnappings and incidents of extortion likely go unreported when ransoms are negotiated and paid by the affected parties without police involvement.

POLITICAL SITUATION

King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who has reigned since 1946, is the head of state and of the armed forces. Although he does not have much direct power, he is revered by Thais and yields significant influence over politicians. There have been concerns over the king's health in recent years. The military has traditionally played an important role in politics. There have been at least 18 attempted military coups, nine of which were successful, since 1932, when absolute monarchy ended.

The most recent military coup occurred in September 2006, when then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was ousted. Eighteen months of military rule by the Committee for National Security (CNS) followed. The CNS oversaw the drafting of a new constitution and elections were held in December 2007. The pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP) won the largest number of seats and formed a coalition government in January 2008. In August 2008, opposition People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) activists launched a campaign to pressure Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej to resign, accusing him of acting as a proxy of Thaksin. Samak resigned a month later after being found guilty of accepting payment to appear on a private television channel while in office and was replaced by Somchai Wongsawat.

Somchai's appointment failed to quell PAD protests as he was also regarded to be a Thaksin associate. Somchai resigned in December 2008 following a constitutional court decision to dissolve the PPP and two coalition partners that were found guilty of fraud in the December 2007 elections. The PAD agreed to end its protests following the ruling party's dissolution and the election of Democrat Party (DP) leader Abhisit Vejjajiva as the new prime minister on 15 December 2008. However, the opposition United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), an affiliate of the Puea Thai party (which was

established by former PPP members), in March 2009 renewed demands for the dissolution of parliament and launched protests in central Bangkok.

RULE OF LAW

Thailand's legal framework is based on civil law. The Supreme Court, which is comprised of three judges appointed by the King, sits in Bangkok. Courts of the first instance, juvenile courts and magistrate courts are located in the capital and each of the provincial capitals. There are also nine regional Courts of Appeal and a Court of Appeal in Bangkok.

There is a constitutional tribunal to solve disputes among the courts. Military courts deal with military justice and Islamic Courts deal with civil cases concerning members of the Muslim minority.

The constitution provides for the presumption of innocence and criminal detainees are guaranteed access to legal counsel. However, it has been claimed that local police often ignore this procedure and conduct interrogations of suspects without providing access to an attorney.

The English-speaking Tourist Police patrol areas frequented by foreigners and are generally friendly and helpful. However, they will do little to help the victims of gem scams and illegal gambling sessions. Travellers should report the loss of money or passports for insurance purposes, but should not expect the return of their property. It is not uncommon for police to seek bribes, especially traffic police, who will attempt to supplement their meagre wages by fining drivers for minor traffic violations. However, this is more likely to affect locals than foreign personnel.

CORRUPTION

Corruption has been a serious problem in Thailand for many years and despite government reform efforts, venality may still be encountered at all levels of society and business. Bribery is considered to be a normal part of doing business and there is also a tradition of presenting 'gifts' to high-ranking officials.

Business travellers and expatriates may be subject to illicit facilitation payments and informal fees to access government services, and may be asked for small amounts of money to overlook minor transgressions.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Severe storms and widespread flooding occur annually, mainly during the wet season between June and December. Typhoons occur on the east coast between June and November. On 26 December 2004, a devastating tsunami on the western Andaman coast killed approximately 5,395 people (including almost 2,000 foreigners), injured at least 8,400 and displaced hundreds of thousands. The tsunami affected coastal areas in Phuket, Phangnga, Krabi, Ranong, Trang and Satun provinces.

WOMEN

While Thai society remains patriarchal, women often play a greater role than their counterparts in some other Asian countries and they are well represented in the labour force, albeit usually at lower levels. Although the constitution includes a clause guaranteeing women equal rights with men, men unquestionably enjoy greater stature and more legal privileges. There are no particular strictures on clothing, other than that it should be suitable for business meetings and that women on formal occasions should avoid trouser suits (female MPs, for instance, must wear a skirt and are expressly forbidden to wear trousers).

Thailand, particularly Bangkok, is generally a safe destination for female business executives travelling alone. Reported incidents of sexual harassment are far lower in Thailand than in many other Asian countries, such as India or Indonesia, though there have been several incidents of high-ranking officials seeking to take advantage of young women staffers or reporters.

Female executives should be aware of the reactivation in February 2002 of a 40-year-old law that makes it technically illegal for women to enter bars and similar entertainment venues unless accompanied by a man. The law is largely ignored, particularly in entertainment spots in five-star hotels and other upmarket venues.

Businesswomen travelling alone are advised to take the following general precautions:

- Ensure that room numbers remain confidential. Do not display the room key tag in public areas and insist that the room number not be given to anyone.
- Insist on a room with a key-chain, deadlock and spy-hole.
- Book a suite on an executive floor if business meetings are planned in the hotel.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By

air

The capital Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK), the country's main international airport, is also the busiest in South-east Asia in terms of scheduled arrivals and departures. BKK is situated at Samut Prakan (19 miles (30km) east of Bangkok) and is the main hub for travel to and throughout the country. The facility is modern and spacious, and boasts a wide range of facilities, including banks, 24-hour bureaux de change, shops, restaurants, bars and tourist kiosks. Chiang Mai Airport (CNX) acts as a northern hub, also serving southern China, Bangladesh and IndoChina. In addition, Samui (USM), Phuket (HKT), Hat Yai (HDY), Krabi (KBV), and Sukhothai (THS) international airports cater largely for the tourist trade. Thai Airways International is the national flag carrier.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's website for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's website for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

Thailand shares a land border with Laos, Malaysia, Cambodia and Burma/Myanmar. However, there is only one rail link out of the country, connecting with Butterworth (Malaysia) 58 miles (93km) south of the Thai-Malaysian border. All other land crossings require bus travel.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Nationals of 42 countries do not require a visa for a stay of less than 30 days, or 14 if entry is via a land border crossing. Citizens from Peru, Brazil and South Korea can stay visa-free for up to 90 days. Nationals of 15 other countries (including the smaller European countries, South Asia, China and Taiwan) may obtain a 15-day visa on arrival after the payment of a small fee. Both the visa-free option and official Tourist Visas are single entry and limited to not more than 90 days within a six month period. 'Non-immigrant' business visas, which are valid for up to 90 days and for business or study purposes, can be obtained from Thai embassies abroad. Overstaying without the proper authority can cause serious problems with the authorities and offenders can be detained until a fine is paid. A 30-day visa-free stay can be extended at immigration offices within Thailand for a further 14 days, and the 14-day visa-free stay can be extended once for seven days. Both extensions cost 1,900 baht.

Entry/Exit requirements

Entry into the country requires a passport valid for at least six months at the time of entry and evidence of onward passage. Electronic goods, such as computers and stereos, can be a problem if customs officials have reason to believe that they are being brought into the country for resale. Suspicions are likely to be aroused if travellers bring in more than one such item. An official letter confirming that the items are for personal use during the trip can obviate such difficulties. Travellers are strongly advised not to accept packages from strangers. Thailand has extremely strict laws on drug smuggling: smugglers – including foreigners – face the death penalty (though it is rarely invoked, especially for foreigners). Thailand also has strict laws on the export of certain art objects. The export of Buddha images is forbidden except in special circumstances, in which case a licence is required.

Procedures

Immigration processing is slow and queues can often take 30 minutes to clear. A 'TM' arrival/departure card and a short customs declaration card are normally handed out before arrival, or can be obtained at desks in the immigration hall. Arriving passengers must fill out both cards, but only the TM landing card, together with the passport, need be given to the immigration officer. They will stamp the passport and the card, and will staple the passenger's portion of the card into the passport. Care should be taken to retain this TM card because it is required for departure. After immigration, passengers proceed to baggage reclaim and then pass through customs control, where the customs card is handed in – there is no need to show passports. Customs officers usually wave off arriving Western business visitors.

Departing passengers are no longer required to pass their hold luggage through an X-ray machine before proceeding to the check-in desks. However, passengers must pass through metal detectors and have their carry-on luggage scanned at departure gates. As long queues can gather at check-in desks, passport control and at X-ray machines, passengers are advised to arrive for international flights at least two hours in advance.

DEPARTURE TAX

There is a departure tax of 700 baht, but it is included in the price of airline tickets.

Vietnam

TRAVEL RISK

There are no major security risks for foreigners, but petty theft is a growing problem, particularly in tourist areas, bars and crowded locations. Criminals and smugglers are active in the border area with Cambodia. Vietnamese security personnel do place foreign visitors under surveillance. Travellers should be aware that rooms, telephones and fax machines may be monitored, and hotel rooms may be searched.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Travel to border areas with Cambodia should be undertaken only in groups, in daylight hours and with a local guide due to risks posed by criminal activities such as smuggling and banditry.
- Take basic security precautions against the risk of petty and street crime, particularly pick pocketing.
- Be aware that confidence tricksters may target foreigners. Be informed of common minor scams and be wary of strangers and their motives. Do not accept food or drink from strangers.
- Taxis are a suitable means of transport. Do not use motorcycle taxi services. Travel by rail and bus is inefficient, uncomfortable and not suitable for business personnel.
- Driving standards are poor and conditions chaotic. Do not self-drive unless very familiar with local conditions. Undertake overland travel outside urban areas in daylight hours only.
- The police are widely corrupt and ineffective. In the event of an emergency or serious criminal incident, contact your embassy for support.

CRIME

Petty crime is the main risk for foreigners. Pickpocketing is a serious problem, particularly by street children in tourist areas. Personnel should store valuables in a hotel safe, keep cameras and wallets out of sight, and should never resist robbers because many petty thieves carry weapons.

Business travellers should beware of drugged drinks and food and are advised to exercise caution when making casual acquaintances. Drinks should never be left

unattended. Conmen attempt to sell everything from gems to the fake bones of missing US servicemen. There have also been reports of airport scams where tourists are offered free transfers to city hotels as a pretext for robbery.

Travel in and around the Cambodian border should only be undertaken in groups, preferably with a local guide, and in daylight hours.

SOCIAL UNREST

The Vietnamese authorities maintain tight control over the population; dissent is suppressed and civil unrest is rare. There are occasional small protests in the capital and frequent land-related demonstrations in rural areas, but neither are likely to impact on foreigners.

KIDNAPPING

There have been reports of short-term kidnaps by pedicab drivers for the purposes of extorting money, but kidnap for ransom poses a minimal risk for foreigners. Almost all cases of kidnap-for-ransom have involved Vietnamese nationals.

TERRORISM

There are no known terrorist groups operating in the country. However, following the October 2002 attacks in Bali (Indonesia), many Western governments have issued warnings about the wider terrorism risks in Asia. Vietnam remains at low risk of attack because of the lack of a local support network for Islamist extremists and a comparatively strong security apparatus. However, the country's growing popularity as a tourist destination may increase the risk from terrorism in the coming years.

CONFLICT

Vietnam has several disputes with neighbouring countries but none of them are expected to lead to full blown hostilities. Tensions with China over the South China Sea and over the Tonkin Gulf lead to periodic stand-offs between rival Chinese and Vietnamese exploration vessels. Small-scale clashes are relatively common along the southern end of Vietnam's border with Cambodia, but these are unlikely to intensify.

POLITICAL SITUATION

There is only one party, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Candidates who wish to contest elections to the unicameral legislature, the National Assembly, have to get the approval of the CPV. Opposition parties are banned. The prime minister and president are elected internally by the National Assembly from among its ranks. The prime minister, president and secretary-general of the CPV are the most important political figures.

The Vietnam People's Army (VPA) continues to wield significant political power. All VPA officers are also members of the CPV. While the CPV is facing an internal struggle between its more conservative members, who are not disposed towards economic reform, and a strengthening liberal wing that is pushing for greater privatisation and

trade, the VPA as a whole tends to lean towards conservatism. Current Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, President Nguyen Minh Triet and CPV general-secretary Nong Duc Manh all support a path of economic reform and gradual liberalisation. The prime minister and president are due to end their five-year terms in 2011.

RULE OF LAW

Although the Constitution provides for judicial independence, in reality the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) controls the courts and there is a significant number of political prisoners. The legal system is also hampered by a shortage of lawyers, who are often reluctant to pursue sensitive cases for fear of repercussions. The death penalty is applied for corruption, violent crimes and drug offences. Vietnam has some of the world's toughest drug laws; possessing, trading or trafficking more than 1.3 pounds (600 gm) of heroin or 44 pounds (20 kg) of opium is punishable by death.

The police are generally corrupt. However, they will treat foreigners with more respect than locals, and can be approached for help.

CORRUPTION

Corruption is widespread, particularly in the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), the military and the government. The authorities have introduced new laws with severe punishments in an attempt to tackle the problem, but the legislation is not enforced consistently and the measures have failed to significantly improve the situation.

Business travellers and expatriates may be subject to illicit facilitation payments and informal fees to access government services and may be asked for small amounts of money to overlook minor transgressions.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Vietnam suffers from seasonal storms and typhoons. Central and north Vietnam are usually worst affected. Flooding, particularly in the Mekong delta, is a regular occurrence during the rainy season, often leading to extensive damage to infrastructure.

BUSINESSWOMEN

Most government and business contacts are likely to be men, though women traditionally play an active part in public life. As a result, a foreign woman executive in a senior business or professional role is unlikely to encounter any problems. However, male Vietnamese, particularly those working for state companies, may at first appear difficult or abrupt. This attitude reflects an ingrained defensive instinct against becoming too involved with any foreigners. The same attitude will also be manifested towards foreign male business colleagues. Women travelling alone should also be careful when out late at night, particularly along deserted streets in Ho Chi Minh, Da Nang and Nha Trang.

Female travellers are advised to:

- ensure that room numbers remain confidential. This includes not publicly displaying the room key tag and emphasising that the room number should not be given to any inquirers;
- insist on a room with a key-chain, deadlock and spy-hole; and
- book a suite on an executive floor if business meetings in the hotel are planned.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

United Airlines (US) began direct commercial flights from the US to Vietnam in December 2004, the first for 30 years. The daily flights go from San Francisco to Ho Chi Minh City. However, most flights from the US still make a transit stop in one of the Asian hub cities for flights to Vietnam, namely Osaka (Japan), Hong Kong, Bangkok (Thailand), Singapore, Seoul (South Korea), Tokyo (Japan) or Taipei (Taiwan). The national airline Vietnam Airlines and several regional carriers, including Thai Airlines and Singapore Airlines, have regular services to Vietnam from these hub cities. It is very difficult to obtain seat reservations during the Tet (New Year) period because many overseas Vietnamese return from Europe, North America and Australia for the holiday.

Main international airports

Tan Son Nhat Airport (SGN) at Ho Chi Minh City is the busiest in the country. Many international flights leaving Noi Bai Airport (HAN) in Hanoi also connect through Ho Chi Minh City.

Airport security

Airport terminal, customs and perimeter security at Tan Son Nhat and Noi Bai airports generally meet international standards. Airline tickets are needed to gain entry to departure areas. Large but usually very orderly crowds can gather outside the airports, especially in Ho Chi Minh, to meet relatives. Travellers should watch out for pickpockets.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

All foreign visitors require a visa, unless their country has a reciprocal agreement with the Vietnamese government that means that visa-free travel is possible. It is advisable to obtain the visa well in advance of travel. Procedures and policies can change abruptly and without warning. Business visas require a letter from a sponsor, which can be arranged through a travel agent or business acquaintance in Vietnam if necessary. Business visas are usually valid for multiple entry.

Procedures

Immigration procedures can be thorough and time consuming (often up to an hour or more at Tan Son Nhat, which has the highest volume of passengers). Visitors are advised to carry spare passport-sized photographs in the event that the visa-issuing

agency has neglected to provide enough sets or regulations change suddenly, requiring more forms to be filled in. Customs procedures are generally quicker. The yellow copy of duplicate white and yellow customs forms must be kept to show to any accommodation or hosts during a visit. Travellers can bring in an unlimited amount of foreign currency, but must declare amounts greater than \$10,000 on the customs forms on arrival. Cameras, computers and other electronic devices officially must also be declared, but nowadays tend to get ignored. Travellers may be asked to produce the items listed on departure to prove that they have not been left behind or sold. The import or export of Vietnamese currency or antiques is prohibited. When leaving the country, it is best to check in at least two hours before departure. The yellow entry/exit form must be produced on departure.

DEPARTURE TAX

An airport tax is levied on all passengers, but is often included in the ticket price. The charge is \$14 at Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi airports, and \$8 at Da Nang airport.

United Arab Emirates - Dubai

TRAVEL RISK

Visitors are highly unlikely to fall victim to violent crime. Petty crime is a minor problem, but levels remain below those in most Western or Asian countries. The UAE has strict laws governing public conduct and punishments can be harsh. There is a significant risk of terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists throughout the Gulf region, including in countries such as the UAE that have traditionally been considered to be safe. This includes the risk of a large-scale, 'spectacular' terrorist attack, but the most immediate risk to foreign personnel in the UAE is posed by individuals seeking to carry out small-scale, spontaneous or indiscriminate attacks on foreign personnel or interests.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Take basic sensible security precautions against the risk of petty and street crime.
- There is an underlying risk both of small-scale opportunistic and large-scale terrorist attack by Islamic extremists. Minimise time spent in the vicinity of likely targets, these may include government and military buildings, military facilities, and Western embassies and commercial assets. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Driving standards are poor and accident rates high. In the event of being involved in an accident immediately report the incident to the police and do not move the vehicles until police officers have arrived at the scene. In Dubai vehicles may be moved to the side of the road in the case of minor accidents.
- Dress modestly and respect Muslim and Arab cultural sensitivities.
- Business travelers, including those intending only to transit through the UAE, are advised to contact their nearest UAE diplomatic representation prior to travel for information on medication restrictions.

CONFLICT

The UAE has boundary disputes with Iran and Oman, but these are unlikely to lead to a major military confrontation. In 1992, Iran unilaterally took over the Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa islands in the Strait of Hormuz. Members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 2005 reiterated the UAE's sovereignty over the disputed islands and urged Iran to resolve the dispute by submitting it to the International Court of Justice. Border disputes between Oman and the UAE were apparently resolved in 2003, but the agreement and maps have not been made public.

CORRUPTION

Given the lack of a clear distinction between the interests of the state and those of the ruling families, reported instances of corruption at the highest political level have rarely been proven.

At lower levels, the government has made a considerable effort to streamline administrative procedures, reduce red tape, increase transparency and protect foreign investment in order to make the UAE an attractive business and investment location. The bribing of public officials is illegal, and foreign nationals are unlikely to experience demands for bribes.

CRIME

Visitors are highly unlikely to fall victim to violent crime. Petty crime is a minor problem, but levels remain below those in most Western or Asian countries. The risk of falling victim to petty crime can be minimised by adopting commonsense security precautions such as storing valuables in a hotel safe and keeping wallets out of sight. Police statistics for Dubai in 2009 revealed that the number of burglaries had increased compared to the previous year. The increase in opportunistic crime is being attributed to the ongoing economic downturn as well as to the poor planning of real estate ventures, some of which lack adequate safety measures.

Business travellers and expatriates should familiarise themselves with UAE law and local customs and understand the consequences of breaking or contravening them; penalties can be harsh and the chances of appeal are limited. Whereas the government previously sought to balance the sensitivities of the local population against the recreational habits of the expatriate community, it is also compelled to protect the conservative nature of UAE society. There has been a notable increase in the enforcement of the law in 2007-8, including sentencing expatriates for drunken behaviour, drink-driving and possession of drugs, including some prescription drugs. Penalties for drug offences are high, even if very small amounts are involved.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The UAE – a group of seven emirates each led by a ruling family – is politically stable. Because of Abu Dhabi's size and oil reserves, it has been dominant, but each ruling family retains considerable autonomy within its emirate. All power is vested in the ruler and political opposition is negligible. The UAE's vast oil wealth enables the government to provide the population with a high standard of living, keeping it content and politically

demobilised. Disputes over succession in the ruling family occur periodically, but to date these have not posed a significant threat to political stability.

RULE OF LAW

According to the constitution, sharia is the principal source of law in the country. The legal system also has elements of the traditional Qadi system. Political and religious pressures inhibit the functioning of the judiciary as an independent authority and the courts rarely deliver judgments that are likely to be contested by the political leadership.

The police wear an olive green uniform. They are efficient and accustomed to dealing with foreigners, though they may not be able to speak sufficient English. There are large numbers of uniformed, as well as plain-clothed, officers deployed throughout urban areas. Police vehicles are white with a green stripe.

The UAE has strict laws governing public conduct. Drunken behaviour in public, sexual relationships outside of marriage and homosexuality are banned and carry harsh penalties, including imprisonment and flogging. Indecent behaviour could lead to arrest and a jail sentence – two British nationals were charged in July 2008 after being arrested at the Jumeirah beach in Dubai. Up to 80 other people were arrested on similar charges between January and July 2008.

A licence is required for drinking alcohol at home. Eating, drinking alcohol and smoking in public are prohibited during the month of Ramadan.

There are also stringent laws on the possession and consumption of drugs, including prescription medication. At least 59 Britons were arrested in 2007 for drug-related offences in the country.

SOCIAL UNREST

The indigenous population is small and in general politically quiescent, though there is some periodic pressure for democratic reform. The state exerts almost total political control over the mostly Asian and Arab expatriate population.

Protests are illegal in the UAE and political demonstrations are almost non-existent. However, demonstrations in response to developments in the Middle East and further afield are possible, as witnessed by small-scale rallies in July 2006 to oppose Israel's military operations in Beirut (Lebanon) and the Gaza Strip (Palestinian Territories), and a demonstration in January 2006 to protest against the publication of cartoons in a Danish newspaper that depicted the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Nonetheless, the security forces are known to act swiftly to prevent any violence.

Workers from South Asia occasionally stage spontaneous protests over their living conditions or salaries. The police usually respond quickly to break up gatherings.

TERRORISM

The UAE has never experienced a major terrorist attack, but there have been a number of small-scale anti-Western incidents. The country hosts a wide selection of attractive targets, and large-scale attacks are possible, though the most immediate risk is posed by small, opportunistic attacks. Islamist extremists may also target the country for its close ties with the US, including the deployment of peacekeeping forces to Afghanistan.

The security forces of Dubai and Abu Dhabi are relatively sophisticated but there have been information-sharing and co-operation issues with the other emirates. A number of features make the UAE vulnerable to terrorism, including porous borders with Saudi Arabia, a long coastline, and the availability of weapons on the black market. Dubai, which has relatively lenient laws, is home to large numbers of expatriates and many high profile international businesses have offices and commercial outlets in the country.

Western governments have periodically raised their threat assessments for the UAE in recent years. The British Foreign Office in June 2008 elevated the terrorist threat level for the UAE from 'general' to 'high'; however, the overall nature of its travel advice for the country did not change. The US consulate general in Dubai was closed briefly in January 2009 after receiving a threatening phone call.

NATURAL DISASTERS

The country is subject to sand storms, dust storms and flashfloods, particularly during the winter months from December to March.

WOMEN

Women face far fewer problems travelling to the UAE than they do in neighbouring Saudi Arabia. It is acceptable for women to travel alone to the UAE. Once the rank of the visiting female executives has been made clear, few problems will arise with their role being accepted by Emiratis (UAE nationals) for general discussions. However, many local male managers refuse to shake women's hands, and may expect females to 'back down' should discussions become confrontational.

Some Emirati women wear the traditional black robe - the *abaya* - but many wear Western-style dress, though shoulders and upper arms are usually covered and skirts reach below the knee. Foreign women are advised to copy this style of dress in public (traditional dress is not necessary). Many banks and some shops have separate women-only service counters.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

A large number of European, North American and Asian airlines serve Abu Dhabi or Dubai, which are common stopping-off points for long flights. The main constituent emirates have stakes in different airlines: Emirates serves Dubai and Etihad Airways serves Abu Dhabi, while the budget airline Air Arabia operates from Sharjah. Bahrain-based Gulf Air serves all UAE destinations. Emirates and Etihad Airways have excellent

safety and service records and have experienced no fatal accidents since beginning operations. Gulf Air also has an overall good safety record, though one of its aircraft crashed off the Bahraini coast in August 2000, killing all on board.

Major international airports

Most foreigners arrive at Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH) or Dubai International Airport (DXB), though the UAE also boasts three other international airports: Sharjah International Airport (SHJ), Fujairah International Airport (FJR) and Ras al-Kheimah International Airport (RTK). An international airport is under construction in Ajman and expected to start operations by 2011. DXB is currently undergoing major expansion with the construction of Terminal Three (which will be dedicated to Emirates); until the project is completed, most airlines will use Terminal One. Two stations on the Dubai Metro (subway) Red Line will also be constructed within the airport complex, one in Terminal One and the other in Terminal Three. The metro system is expected to be completed by 2010.

Entry and departure formalities are routine and efficient, especially at DXB. Customs regulations vary between the emirates, but AUH and DXB allow alcohol to be purchased at the arrival terminal. Videotapes that contain sex scenes or extreme violence will be confiscated at customs. Magazines that feature men or women without 'reasonable clothing' will also be retained.

Travellers should note that certain prescription medications that are legal in many countries, including codeine and temazepam, are banned in the UAE; possession of the drug, which includes its presence in the body, is punishable by a four-year prison sentence. Personnel should note that many over-the-counter remedies contain codeine. Business travellers who may be taking a course of prescription medication should carry a medical certificate stating the name of the treatment and the reason for taking it. Full contact and personal details should also be included. Visitors who have concerns are encouraged to contact the UAE embassy or consulate in their country of residence before they travel. In addition, visitors are reminded that the UAE strictly prohibits the import of all illegal recreational drugs, such as marijuana and cocaine; arriving passengers who are caught with even small amounts of such drugs face long prison sentences.

Departing passengers are advised that only limited amounts of liquids, gels and aerosols will be permitted in hand luggage. The restrictions apply to commonplace liquid items, including drinks; cosmetics; hygiene products, such as toothpaste; and products in pressurised containers, such as perfume or shaving foam. Exceptions will be made for essential medicines and baby food, subject to screening. Prospective passengers should consult the airport [website](#) for more information.

Airport security

Security standards are high at all airports. This reflects the authoritarian nature of the regime rather than any direct risk faced by the airports or airlines. Screening procedures are thorough and efficient.

By land

Land travel is not recommended.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) nationals do not need a visa. Passport holders from Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the US and the Vatican can obtain a 30-day visa on arrival in the UAE.

Visitors from other countries may be sponsored for their UAE visa by a business-class hotel, a company with which they have business dealings, or an expatriate with a resident's visa and a salary of at least 4,000 dirhams per month.

Electronic identification cards, known as 'smart cards', which allow passengers to pass through passport control with maximum speed, are now available to UAE and GCC nationals and residents. Passengers can swipe their cards through electronic gates on arrival and departure. The cards are valid for two years at a cost of 200 dirhams and can be obtained in Dubai from Dubai International Airport (DXB), the office of air travel services provider Dnata on Shaikh Zayed Road, the Dnata Dubai Airline Centre, the Dubai Municipality, the Jebel Ali and Abuhail branches of the Dubai Naturalisation and Residency Department (DNRD) and the Bin Soqat shopping centre (mall).

Entry/Exit requirements

All visitors must carry a passport that is valid for six months beyond the intended departure date, as well as return or onward travel tickets. Passports should not show evidence of prior or intended travel to Israel (personnel who wish to travel regularly to Israel and destinations in the Arab world are advised that it is beneficial to have two passports).

Customs will confiscate magazines that feature men or women not wearing 'reasonable' clothing and any other material considered offensive. Departing passengers are advised that only limited amounts of liquids, gels and aerosols will be permitted in hand luggage. The restrictions apply to commonplace liquid items, including drinks; cosmetics; hygiene products, such as toothpaste; and products in pressurised containers, such as perfume or shaving foam. Exceptions will be made for essential medicines and baby food, subject to screening.

DEPARTURE TAX

There is a departure fee of 30 dirhams, though this is usually included in the price of the air ticket.

United States

TRAVEL RISK

Crime levels are fairly low in commercial centres, but higher in low-income, inner-city areas where social tension, poverty and street gangs exist; there are also significant regional variations. Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the government has enacted several laws and initiatives to mitigate the risk of terrorism. Nevertheless, the unpopularity of US foreign policy abroad, particularly its war on terrorism, continues to inspire Islamist extremists to attempt to conduct mass-casualty attacks in the US. Social protests relating to the war in Iraq, immigration and environmental issues are not uncommon and most tend to pass off peacefully, though these may cause localised traffic congestion. Severe weather conditions – hurricanes between June and November along the south eastern parts of the country; forest fires in dry areas along the west coast; and snowstorms during winter months – often disrupt air and road travel.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can continue.
- Be aware of the geography of major cities and avoid high-crime areas (often lower-income districts) if possible.
- Take basic sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty and street crime.
- It is advisable to carry original identification documents at all times; these may be requested during police stop-checks, when entering certain entertainment venues, and when purchasing some public transport tickets.
- There is a persistent risk of terrorist attack by Islamist extremists in the US. Potential targets include landmark buildings, critical infrastructure points, transport networks and popular tourist attractions or commercial centres. Jewish and official Israeli interests are also a potential target. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Be aware there is also a low but credible risk of terrorist attack by domestic terrorist groups, including right-wing extremists and animal rights activists; these are unlikely to pose a direct risk to foreign personnel.
- Be aware of the risk of periodic bouts of racially motivated unrest in low-income areas of major cities, occasionally spreading into commercial and tourist districts. In the event of unrest, return to your accommodation and stay there until the situation stabilises.
- Public transport is suitable for business visitors, though bus terminals are often situated in low-income districts; arrange onward transport by taxi or to be met on arrival if travelling by bus.

CRIME

Crime poses the main security risk to business visitors in the US. Mugging and violent assault are the main concerns; most muggers are armed with guns or knives. Violent crime is generally concentrated in poor and economically depressed districts of a city, and these areas are often far from most business and tourist spots. However, street crime can spill over into otherwise safe central commercial, hotel and entertainment districts. Crime outside major metropolitan areas is generally low. Drug-related gang

violence is common in depressed inner-city areas and the suburbs of cities, where there is a high murder rate.

TERRORISM

Islamist extremist groups or individuals linked to or inspired by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network pose a credible threat to the US. The imposition of stringent anti-terrorism measures, including increased security in and around airports and other transport hubs, government buildings, large public assemblies (such as major sporting occasions) and locations of symbolic importance following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, have made it more difficult for extremists to carry out high-profile, mass-casualty attacks. However, there remains a longer-term risk of a serious terrorist incident targeting a high-profile location in a main city. Heightened security at high-profile locations in main cities such as New York City or Washington DC may encourage terrorists to concentrate on similar targets elsewhere in the US or on 'softer' targets in main cities. Jewish and official Israeli interests, including diplomatic premises and state offices (such as the premises of the national airline El Al), are also potential targets. Robust security measures at most official Israeli premises might encourage extremists to focus on synagogues and Jewish organisations.

In the years following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, security agencies have foiled several nascent terrorist plots through extensive surveillance and preventive detentions. In June 2007, the police arrested four members of an Islamist terrorist cell suspected of planning an attack on New York's John F Kennedy International Airport. The police in May 2009 arrested four people suspected of plotting attacks on synagogues and military aircraft in New York City. The failed 25 December 2009 attempt to blow up Northwest Airlines flight 253 over Detroit (Michigan state) led to the government's admission that there were serious intelligence failures. A vehicle containing a crude bomb was parked in New York's Time Square district on 1 May. The failed attack has had significant repercussions in the way the administration prepares to thwart future attacks given the symbolic value of an attempted strike at the US' commercial and cultural heartland. This and other high-profile incidents, including a number of recently foiled plots within the US and the October 2009 shooting at the Fort Hood military base in Texas, have renewed concerns about the risk of such attacks, including those perpetrated by home-grown terrorists.

KIDNAPPING

Most publicised kidnaps involve child custody disputes, sexual assaults or occur during robberies. However, conventional kidnapping for the purpose of extorting ransoms in exchange for the victim's release occur with more frequency than is commonly perceived; they are not widely reported. Most cases do not last long and involve small ransom demands. Kidnappers do not target short-term foreign business visitors, though isolated kidnaps have involved high-profile wealthy local industrialists.

SOCIAL UNREST

The main issues that mobilise direct action groups are immigration, the war in Iraq, abortion and other topical political and environmental issues. Business visitors should avoid protests because of the risk of getting caught up in incidental violence. Racial

tension provoke occasional rioting, generally sparked off by incidents involving the police or perceived shortcomings of the judicial system. Most riots are confined to certain poor African-American districts of cities, but violence can spread to central commercial and hotel districts. Los Angeles in 1992 experienced the worst rioting in US history. Riots spread to many other US towns and cities. Residents of St Petersburg (Florida) in 1996 rioted and set fire to buildings after the police shot dead an African-American motorist. Similarly, the fatal shooting in January 2009 of an African-American by a police officer triggered violent protests in California; a court's verdict, which convicted the officer of involuntary manslaughter, triggered renewed unrest in July 2010. However, a repeat of violence on the scale of that seen in 1992 is unlikely.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The US is a federal republic, consisting of 50 states and the District of Columbia (DC). The president serves a four-year term and assumes the roles of head of state, chief executive and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The vice-president follows the president in the executive. The US has a bicameral Congress, with the Senate as the upper house and the House of Representatives as the lower house. Each state has two senators, while the number of congressional representatives is related to the state's population. Puerto Rico is represented in Congress through a commissioner, while American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam and the US Virgin Islands have delegates. The country has a stable democracy and its two main political parties are the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. In November 2008, Democratic Party candidate Barack Obama was elected president, following two terms of Republican administration under George W Bush. Obama was sworn into office on 20 January 2009.

RULE OF LAW

The judiciary is known to be efficient, with judges and civil servants being fair and impartial. Bribery and other forms of corruption are rare, and the public maintains a high level of trust in the judicial system. The US has an extensive system of law enforcement agencies operating at the local (county/municipal), state and federal levels. Police officers have a high level of professionalism and can be approached with confidence by foreign nationals seeking assistance.

CORRUPTION

Levels of corruption in the US are generally low and do not represent a threat to companies or individuals operating in the country. The public has a high level of confidence in the political system and national institutions.

NATURAL DISASTERS

The US is vulnerable to hurricanes, tornadoes, snowstorms and forest fires. The hurricane season normally runs from June to November and the most affected area is usually the south-eastern part of the country. Snowstorms during the winter months are also common in various parts of the country, while tornadoes are a particular concern in the Midwest and south-eastern states. Forest and bush fires pose a risk in many dry areas, particularly on the west coast. Several Midwest and south-eastern states experience occasional floods between March and June.

WOMEN

More women occupy managerial and executive positions in the US than in most other countries. Chauvinistic attitudes towards women are less common and less tolerated. Female personnel should stick to main, well-lit streets when walking at night. Women may be considered comparatively easy targets for muggers and face the additional risk of sexual assault.

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

The main hubs are New York City's John F Kennedy Airport (JFK) , Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in California, O'Hare International Airport (ORD) in Chicago, Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) in Virginia, George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) in Houston and Miami International Airport (MIA) in Florida. Dallas-Fort Worth International (DFW) in Texas, one of the country's largest airports, is served by all major domestic and many international airlines.

Security for both domestic and international flights has been increased considerably following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Flights are occasionally affected by hoax bomb alerts, while intensified security can cause delays when terrorist threat levels are elevated. All travellers should carry photographic identification and declare any items that could be used as a weapon. Non-US nationals must provide fingerprint and iris scans, and are likely to be questioned rigorously about the purpose of their visit, prolonging entry procedures. Check-in times can be protracted because of increased security, including screening of luggage, shoes and sometimes clothing. Personnel on international flights are advised to arrive at least three hours before departure. Passengers on domestic flights need to undergo similar screening. The US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for airport security and makes it mandatory for all passengers to get their names matched against its 'Watch' and 'No-Fly' lists. It reserves all rights to prevent passengers from travelling.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's website for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's website for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Visas

Citizens of countries covered by the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) travelling to the US for tourism or business for 90 days or less do not need to obtain a visa, provided that they have a valid passport. However, travellers from VWP countries need to obtain an approved application from the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) at least three days before a trip to the US. Barring VWP countries and Canada, nationals of all other countries must have a visa, the application for which should be put in at least four weeks before travelling. Urgently needed visas should be applied for through the travel agent booking the ticket.

Passports for VWP countries issued on or after 26 October 2006 must include biometric information (so-called e-passports include a chip with the relevant information); otherwise, the holder is required to obtain a visa. VWP citizens with passports issued between 26 October 2005 and 25 October 2006 do not require a visa as long as they have machine-readable passports with a digital photograph of the holder. Visitors with valid, but older machine-readable passports (issued prior to 26 October 2005) that do not have a digital photograph are still allowed into the US without a visa.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative requires that all personnel travelling to the US from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean region carry a passport. Additionally, citizens of US dependencies, Canada, Mexico and Bermuda travelling to the US by land or sea need to carry a passport, an enhanced driver's licence, an enhanced identification card or a NEXUS, SENTRI or FAST card.

Entry/Exit requirements

It is illegal to import Cuban cigars or tobacco. There are no restrictions on the import or export of local or foreign currencies; however, travellers arriving or departing the US should declare amounts exceeding \$10,000.

Procedures

Business visitors arriving in the US may have to wait more than an hour to clear immigration. US immigration procedures may seem aggressive: travellers may have to explain in detail the purpose of their trip. Nationals from Arab or Islamic countries should expect significant delays because of questioning and identity checks. Business visitors whose passports contain Cuban visa stamps may also face lengthy enquiries. The US can deny entry to executives (and their families) of foreign companies that benefit from the use of property confiscated from US citizens since the 1959 Cuban revolution. The State Department will warn individuals who are directly affected by this ban.

Do not mention guns or bombs, even as a joke: this is likely to lead to instant arrest. Personnel should be aware that the US authorities may insist on searching the contents of laptop computers on entry to the country. There are few legal safeguards against this, and any resistance may lead to the laptop being impounded. However, such searches remain extremely rare. Companies that are concerned about data security in this respect may wish to consider issuing travelling personnel with 'clean' laptops. Expect long queues and delays at airports around public holidays, especially in the week around the Thanksgiving holiday (the last Thursday of November).

DEPARTURE TAX

- Usually included in the price of the air ticket.

Annex B

How to use us : 24/7 Travel Security Assistance

- You can speak to our security professionals at our Global Security Centre via your dedicated number **+65 63380010**.
- You may also contact the following key regional International SOS Assistance Centres at these numbers:

London	+ 44 20 8762 8008
Paris	+33 155 633 155
Philadelphia	+1 215 942 8226
Singapore	+65 6338 7800

- Country information and advice is also available on our Travel Security Online website, www.internationalsos.com .

This site will allow you to register for emails to be pushed automatically to your school email address. It is recommended that you select security daily digests, special advisories and evacuation notices so that you can be forewarned of any incidents that could affect your trip planning and execution.

Annex C

Preparation checklist

Documents	Hand Luggage
E-Tickets	Light, warm top
Itinerary	Notebook Computer
Passport	Power adaptor
Vaccination Card	Mobile phone charger
Driver's license	Essential medications
Prescriptions	Repeat prescription
Travel insurance policy	Sunglasses
Photocopies x 3 of passport, visas, credit cards, itinerary, vaccination record, account numbers, driver's license, prescriptions	Spare glasses
Passport photos x 4	Travel guide
Map of destination country & city	
	Contact Numbers
Additional Preparation	Family contact numbers
Will in order? – long term assignment?	Driver/transfer contact number
General Insurances in order	Overseas office numbers
Bills paid? – long term assignment?	Hotel contact numbers
Keys left with neighbour? – long term assignment?	Embassy contact numbers
Pet's feeding arrangements? – long term assignment?	Final Checks and Preparations
Pre-reading	Manager/NOK aware of itinerary
Language essentials	Final check of baggage for sharps
Appropriate vaccines up to date (check relevant country information at www.internationalsos.com and www.control-risks.com)	Mark destination city map with routes and safe-houses
	Remove excess paperwork from wallet
Luggage	
Lock for luggage	
Concealed label and address fitted to all cases	
Formal wear	
Sports wear	
Underwear and socks	
Sleep wear	
Warm clothing (light/warm top in hand luggage, jumper, overcoat) Belts, Ties, Cuff links	
Shoes	
Jewellery	
Makeup?	
Sun hats and sun screen	
Insect repellent	
Bathers	
Toiletries	
Medical kit (check use-by dates)	

ANNEX D

Briefing checklist for bus drivers

Step	Action	Remarks
1	Obtain 2 tourist maps with street names and guidebook with pictures	
2	Mark maps to highlight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accommodation ▪ Office locations ▪ Dangerous areas and locations to avoid (meeting points for mob action, popular expatriate night spots, dangerous suburbs) ▪ Routes (primary, secondary and alternate) ▪ Reference points ▪ Safe places to stop at (5 star hotels, courts, company offices, etc). Police stations and army barracks may not always be safe places to seek assistance. ▪ Evacuation ports of departure (airport, ports, main roads) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name or number routes. ▪ Landmarks ▪ These will vary by country, based on the political situation
3	Orientate driver to the map and highlight all points marked on map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate key reference points by using pictures if necessary
4	Outline standard procedures for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Searching and securing of the vehicle ▪ Preparation and maintenance of the vehicle ▪ Collection and drop-off ▪ Speed ▪ Obstacle/obstruction ▪ Accident ▪ Incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stress regular maintenance and daily check of fuel, water, oil and tires
5	Outline routes to be used for the day's journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cover primary and alternate routes
6	Allocate primary and alternate Emergency Rendezvous locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At designated safe houses
7	Highlight no-go areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marked on map in red
8	Review "emergency actions" and point out location of medical kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accident, incident, surveillance
9	If in doubt get driver to drive route prior to picking you up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In high risk environments
10	Exchange mobile contact numbers and provide a card with your emergency numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct regular communications check