



## SAR Consultancy (Security Analysis and Research)

### General Security Overview for Kenya



SAR Consultancy assesses the security situation in Kenya as moderate overall, however, in certain areas crime and terrorism are rated as high. The risk of terrorist attacks should not be underestimated given that there has been reports of a number of potential terrorist plots foiled over the last weeks and months by the security forces. That being said, such attacks may be low to medium scale, as part of a sustained campaign within the country. Many of these planned attacks have been targeted at Nairobi and Mombasa, but have not been limited to these areas. However, the North East of the country is the most common region targeted for such attacks. Any travel to Kenya should be supported by up to date security travel advice, including advice on accommodation options. Should travel to the North East of the country be necessitated, a detailed security plan should be undertaken and adhered to at all times. Security awareness training is highly recommended prior to any travel to this area of Kenya. Travel to Nairobi and Mombasa should be conducted only after accessing up to date travel advice and while security awareness training is not mandatory, it is recommended where possible.

### Security Situation in Kenya

#### Terrorism

The modus operandi for terrorist attacks in Kenya are many and varied. They often include one or more of the following, suicide operations, bomb and or grenade attacks, kidnapping, attacks on civil aviation, maritime attacks, etc. The main risk of terrorist activities comes from the Somalia based group referred to as al-Shabab, with extensive networks in Kenya. It is forecasted that this group will continue to conduct regular attacks especially along the Somalia border, near Mandera and Garissa. This is largely due to its location close to Somalia and to the porous borders. It is being alleged that such militants are moving into the North East, to areas connecting Isiolo and Wajir. Furthermore, this perceived increased risk is attributed in part to a growing number of Kenyan extremists in country. Some counter terrorist measures undertaken by security forces have purportedly led to an increase in the sense of marginalisation thereby



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promoting more sympathisers, financing and operatives. For example, the area around Dadaab refugee camp, has been highlighted as vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment by al-Shabab. Specific targets are likely to include Nairobi and Mombasa. Plots have been foiled in the last number of weeks and months in both cities. While the group are likely to target soft targets, such as shopping centres, transports hubs, restaurants and hotels, business assets may also be targeted. Unlike some major cities through-out the world, the government security measures are unlikely to significantly deter such attacks.

### **Crime**

It should be noted that the greatest threat to most international visitors relate to crime. Carjacking and armed burglary are the two greatest risk in most of the cities, including both Nairobi and Mombasa. The use of weapons is common place during the commission of the majority of crimes. Incidents can quickly become violent and can involve fatalities, if people attempt to obstruct or prevent such crimes. Street crime is also common in major cities. Such crime usually involve multiple armed assailants. However, pick pocketing and snatch and grabs are also common. Kenya is listed as a transit country for illegal narcotics but has not recorded a large number of related incidents of violence. There is also a risk of kidnapping. The greatest risk is present in the north of Kenya near the Somalia border related to extremism, however there is also a threat of kidnapping for ransom from more criminal gangs. The areas most at risk include, the north-eastern area, the border and coastal areas, but Nairobi is also vulnerable. The police response to such criminality can be limited. The Kenyan Police can lack the equipment, resources and training to respond to certain crimes adequately. Their record for investigation and solving serious crime is limited. Corruption also impacts the criminal justice system, at all levels.

*SAR advises that internationals travelling to or living in Kenya adopt normal crime prevention methods, to reduce their risk. Carrying expensive items of jewellery, electronics, or large amounts of cash, should be avoided. While hotel safes and deposit boxes should be used, they are also vulnerable so travelling with such items should be avoided at all, if possible. Night time activities should be avoided. Windows and doors should be locked in vehicles when travelling, both day and night. Frequently travelling the same routes should be avoided. Those with predictable routines are more vulnerable to kidnap for ransom than those who alter their routines. SAR recommends that daily routines be altered and not broadly circulated.*

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### *Criminality against Females*

Female visitors to Kenya should be mindful of an increased risk of sexual violence and rape. The majority of cases occur in low income communities. Attacks are most common at night and or in remote areas. *SAR recommends that females remain vigilant and only use reputable taxis or vehicles hired through a third party, such as a hotel. When selecting accommodation, be it short or long term, extra precautions should be taken.*

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### **Civil Unrest**

Incidents of civil unrest are relatively common. Grievances over land, marginalisation, lack of economic opportunities, and high level of poverty can be drivers for such unrest. Strikes are routine with sporadic reports of violence and protests elsewhere. Rioting has been witnessed but to a lesser frequency. Such civil unrest can be seen both in the major cities and more rurally. The North East of Kenya, north of Isiolo experience clashes occasionally. Tribal clashes, related violence, cattle rustling and armed robbery are also common. While such threats are not normally directed at internationals, *SAR Consultancy advises that all visitors should avoid such incidents or hotspots where possible. All demonstrations and political rallies should also be avoided.*

### **Hazards**

The risks relating to road traffic accident should not be ignored. This is not helped by road conditions. In Nairobi the main roads are relatively well maintained but this is not the same everywhere. Traffic laws are routinely ignored and driving ability can be limited, whilst vehicles are often badly maintained.

Accidents are common and available medical care can be limited, so precautions should be taken. SAR recommends travel by four wheel drive especially if travelling outside of the major cities. Night time driving is not recommended due to the risk of criminality, especially carjacking.

### **Weather**

During the rainy seasons (mar-may and nov-dec), the weather can cause disruption due to flooding, landslides and related hazards. Flash floods have been experienced in Nairobi and Mombasa, leading to a number of casualties in both cases. The North East of the country, near Garissa has also been impacted by such flooding. At other times of the year, droughts are common. Areas commonly experiencing droughts include the North and Eastern parts of the country, such as Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Moyale, Turkana and Wajir. This can be exacerbated by wildfires.

### **Travel**

Where possible, SAR recommends that all internationals travel by air for travel within the country. When travelling within the major city, it is advised to use a reputable provider. Basic security precautions should be taken at all times. SAR also recommends that all those using taxis should not use communal taxis, nor should they allow their driver to pick up other passengers along the route. It is also recommended that the price be negotiated before the journey begins. It is not recommended to walk alone, unless for short distances and in daylight. In many cases, walking even in groups is not recommended. The use of public transport should be avoided, where possible.

### **Nairobi**

The security situation in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya has been assessed as moderate, however, the risk of terrorism is high and crime is high. There is a growing presence of Islamist extremists in the city, which increases the risk of terrorist attacks against Western targets. The significance of the city in regard to its terrorism risk relates to the position Nairobi plays as a major African commercial city. While large scale terrorist attacks have been witnessed, the majority of related incidents have been targeted at softer targets and in lower income areas. This has been attributed to the protection and sanctity such locations give to militants. Areas commonly targeted include, Dandora, South C (Southside), Eastleigh, and other industrial districts. This results in a lower risk to internationals, however, the Westgate Shopping Centre incident illustrates the vulnerability to high risk attacks.

Both violent and petty crime are prolific throughout the city and frequently affect travellers and internationals. While much of the crime is opportunistic, internationals are commonly targeted due to their perceived wealth. The most common location in Nairobi resided in by internationals are the West

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## Things to know whilst travelling to Kenya

Kenya was ranked 145 out of 175 on the Transparency International Corruption Index in 2014.

Taking photos without permission can cause suspicion both from the security forces and the locals, especially in more rural areas.

Nairobi and Mombasa experience almost half the crime experienced in the whole of Kenya.

It is not recommended to use the ambulance services. Prior contact with a reputable service provider such as International SOS may be prudent.

Corruption is common in government, the civil service, business circles.

Armed robberies are common, usually targeting fuel stations, businesses and shopping facilities, Nairobi is particularly prone.

Access to weapons is common throughout the country and the use of same is frequent.

and North West of the city, which include Gigiri, Kilimani, Loresho and Westlands. Burglary, theft and armed robbery are the most common risk. Crime hotspots include the Globe Cinema Roundabout and the Ring Road around Race Course Road. Carjacking's are common within the city, the rate of which increases significantly after dark. Access to weapons is prolific throughout the city. Civil Unrest incidents are common within the city, due to the many grievances of the wider population, especially those from lower income communities. Ethnic or communal clashes also often result in unrest.

*SAR advised that those travelling into Nairobi by air have pre-arranged transfers from the airport to their hotels or hosts. Reports of incidents relating to carjacking's, kidnapping and robberies near the airport have been reported. Where taxis are being used, passengers should only use reputable providers. The fare should be agreed prior to departure. The state owned company Kenatco are reportedly a lot safer than private cars and taxis. Walking within the city centre is not prohibited, but should only be undertaken during hours of day light. Within the suburbs, daytime walking should be avoided or undertaken with caution. Public transport should be avoided at all times.*

### **Mombasa**

The security situation in Mombasa is assessed by SAR as moderate to high. In respect specifically to terrorism and crime it is high in both cases. Unemployment amongst the youth is high, anti-government sentiment, and grievances amongst the general population are high. Perceptions of marginalisation amongst many Muslims is high, which is suspected to have led to radicalisation and vulnerability to unrest, terrorism and violence. As mentioned above, the risk of terrorism in Mombasa is high. Significant factors that increase this risk include the presence of a large number of internationals, and the presence of the commercial port. While the city has not seen a major attack in years, isolated incidents are more common. While many of the incidents are limited to lower income areas, incidents have been reported more centrally.

Crime poses a high threat to internationals in Mombasa. Like Nairobi, carjacking's are common. The greatest risk is while stopped at traffic lights, and or while waiting, exiting or entering the vehicle. Burglaries are also common and are mostly targeted in Nyali and Kizingo areas of the city. Travelling to and from the MOI Airport can expose internationals to the risk of opportunistic crime. Arterial routes are also commonly targeted by opportunistic criminals. RTA are common and are viewed as a security and safety concern.

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### **SAR Consultancy**

SAR Consultancy offers Security and Analytical packages for a broad range of users, with packages aimed at all needs and requirements. 'Off the shelf security packages' are available, as are bespoke products which can be provided on request. SAR is active in Africa, Europe and the Balkans, with ongoing expansion into Asia, working with Governments, NGOs, Private Business, Think Tanks, Researchers, etc.

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