

RED, WHITE, & BLUE *SEA SANDS SKIES*

AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

• January - March 2021 •



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RIYADH*

American Citizen Services Public Hours:

Sunday - Thursday, 8:30pm-12:00pm

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2021



From the Desk of the Consul General and Counselor for Consular Affairs Michael Garcia

A belated welcome to 2021! It's a new year and while some things changed, others did not. We have a new U.S. president. On January 20 we witnessed the inauguration of the 46th President of the United States, President Joe Biden. We also have a new head of U.S. foreign affairs. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken was sworn in on January 26. They have expressed their commitment to Americans living abroad. The protection of our U.S. citizens overseas remains the highest priority of the U.S. Mission in Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Government. Our dedicated consular staff at the Embassy in Riyadh and Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran are always here to support and assist you.

Some things, however, have not changed. We remind U.S. citizens in the Kingdom of the Department of State's Travel Advisory for Saudi Arabia including the threat of missile and drone attacks. You can see the Travel Advisory [here](#). You can also read more regarding safety and security in the following pages of this newsletter. And while vaccines have brought some hope to the COVID-19 situation, the pandemic continues. This pandemic continues to cast a long shadow over everything we do, and requirements and restrictions remain in place everywhere we go – in the Kingdom and overseas. Remember, the U.S. implemented testing requirements for entry into the United States on January 26. It is important that we all remain mindful about what we can do to keep ourselves, our families, and our communities healthy and safe.

And one more thing that doesn't change and we can't avoid – taxes! More on that in this issue.

Happy 2021!

Mike



Inauguration of the 46th President of the United States Joe Biden

*“AMERICA'S ALLIANCES ARE OUR
GREATEST ASSET, AND LEADING WITH
DIPLOMACY MEANS STANDING SHOULDER-
TO-SHOULDER WITH OUR ALLIES AND KEY
PARTNERS ONCE AGAIN.”*

— President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.



FAREWELL



A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM U.S. AMBASSADOR JOHN ABIZAID



It has been my distinct honor to represent the American people and the United States of America in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Together with all of you – the American Community in the Kingdom – we have strengthened our ties with our Saudi partners and advanced U.S. objectives and priorities in this country and around the region. Your support, tremendous commitment to this bilateral relationship, and warm friendship are among the high points of my and my wife Kathy's time in Saudi Arabia. We are truly grateful to so many of you with whom we have had a chance to meet – in person and virtually – for the many wonderful memories, which we will carry with us to our home in Nevada.

It is indeed time for Kathy and me to say good-bye and wish you a very fond farewell. As our country prepares to inaugurate President-elect Biden, our Mission has been supporting the work

of the U.S. government to ensure a smooth transition to a new Administration. At the same time, we have continued our close cooperation with the Saudi government and its people to deepen the strong partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Many of you will recall our celebrations last year in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran of the 75th anniversary of the USS Quincy meeting between President Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz Al Saud. This meeting launched an enduring partnership, which continues to underpin our many successful shared efforts to enhance our countries' prosperity, security, and mutual friendship. Our Mission will carry forward this important work in the months and years ahead with your support. This morning, when I departed Saudi Arabia, Martina Strong, whom many of you know, took over the leadership of our Mission as Chargé d'Affaires.

As always, the protection of our U.S. citizens overseas remains the highest priority of our Mission and the U.S. Government. The dedicated staff at the Embassy in Riyadh and Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran are always here to support and assist you. I encourage the American Citizen community to remain mindful about what we can do to keep ourselves, our families, and our communities healthy and safe.

Thank you all, and especially our citizen liaison volunteers, for your friendship and support.

Farewell and Best Wishes,

Ambassador John Abizaid



SECURITY ALERT

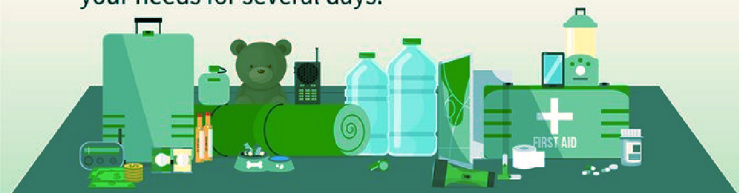


Continued Threat of Drone and Missile Attacks in KSA

The U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia reminds U.S. citizens of the Department of State's Travel Advisory for Saudi Arabia, which states the need to "exercise increased caution in Saudi Arabia due to terrorism and the threat of missile and drone attacks on civilian targets." Extremist groups and regional actors have conducted destructive missile and drone attacks against a variety of targets including critical infrastructure, military facilities, airports, and energy facilities throughout the country, as well as vessels in the Red Sea shipping lanes. These attacks occur with little or no warning. The Islamic Republic of Iran has supplied Yemen-based Houthis and other regional proxy groups with weapons, including drones, missiles, and rockets. Houthi militants continue to plan and conduct attacks against locations in Saudi Arabia. Violence associated with Iran-supported groups represents a significant threat. U.S. citizens living and working near military bases and critical civilian infrastructure are at heightened risk of missile and drone attack.

Build A Kit

Have enough food, water and other supplies to support your needs for several days.



The Travel Advisory urges U.S. citizens to avoid travel to areas within 50 miles of the Saudi-Yemen border. It further notes that the International Airport in Abha is a frequent target of cross-border attacks by regional actors, and that U.S. Mission personnel and their families are not permitted to use the airport without Chief of Mission approval. You can read the full Travel Advisory [here](#).

The U.S. Mission urges American citizens in the Kingdom to review precautions to take in the event of an attack.

Actions to Take:

- If you hear a loud explosion or if sirens are activated, immediately seek cover.
- If in a home or a building, go to the lowest level of the structure with the fewest exterior walls, windows, and openings; close any doors and sit near an interior wall, away from any windows or openings.
- If you are outdoors, immediately seek cover in a hardened structure; if that is not possible, lie down and cover your head with your hands.
- Be aware that even if the incoming missile or drone is intercepted, falling debris represents a significant risk.
- After the attack, stay away from any debris, and monitor major news outlets for official guidance.



REGISTER FOR STEP

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service for Americans to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

<https://step.state.gov/STEP>

Stay Informed, Stay Connected, Stay Safe!



SIGN UP FOR SMS ALERTS

If you wish to receive important announcements via text message enroll in our SMS alert system at:

[https:// Tinyurl.com/USKSAAAlerts](https://Tinyurl.com/USKSAAAlerts)

Messaging and Data Rates May Apply



TAXES



It's Tax Time! If you need assistance, please contact [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) or see a tax specialist. The Embassy and Consulates are unable to provide tax advice.

If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, the rules for filing taxes are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad. However, overseas tax filers are eligible for an automatic extension. See [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for details. Your worldwide income is subject to U.S. income tax, regardless of where you reside.



UNPAID TAXES MAY RESULT IN REVOCATION OR ⚠ DENIAL OF A PASSPORT ⚠

If you have seriously delinquent tax debt, IRC § 7345 authorizes the IRS to certify that debt to the State Department for action. The State Department generally will not issue a passport to you after receiving certification from the IRS.

Upon receiving certification, the State Department will deny your passport application and/or may revoke your current passport. If your passport application is denied or your passport revoked and you are overseas, the State Department may issue you a limited validity passport good only for direct return to the United States.

You can find more information on the Internal Revenue Service's website.



TRAVEL AND VACCINES



Living or Traveling in KSA: Know the restrictions before you travel

Tawakkalna App Mandatory for Entry to Public and Private Buildings

All retail establishments and public buildings in Riyadh and other locations require that individuals use the Tawakkalna app to be admitted into the establishment.

Travel Restrictions to Saudi Arabia

On February 3, 2021, Saudi Arabia suspended the entry of travelers from the United States and 19 other countries, as well as travelers who have been in the United States or the 19 other countries within 14 days prior to seeking entry into Saudi Arabia.

Travel suspended from the following: *Argentina, the UAE, Germany, the United States, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Pakistan, Brazil, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Turkey, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Lebanon, Egypt, India and Japan.*

Testing Required for Entry to the United States

All travelers to the United States ages two years and older must provide a negative COVID-19 viral test taken within three calendar days of travel. Alternatively, travelers to the U.S. may provide documentation from a licensed health care provider of having recovered from COVID-19 in the 90 days preceding travel.

Vaccinations in the Kingdom

On February 18th, the Saudi Ministry of Health announced the start of the "second phase" of vaccine distribution, saying that it was now available in all areas of the Kingdom. U.S. citizens and residents in Saudi Arabia can sign up for a vaccine using the Sehhaty app.

The U.S. Mission cannot provide vaccines and encourages people to use the local market to get vaccinated. For the most up-to-date information on the vaccine and testing please visit the [Ministry of Health here.](#)



PASSPORTS



ACS APPOINTMENTS

U.S. passport and notarial services are available by appointment only at the Embassy in Riyadh, and Consulates in Jeddah and Dhahran. Please see our website for information about these services, as well as how to schedule your appointment online:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/citizenship-services/>

Was your child born in Saudi Arabia and needs their first U.S. passport? Please see detailed information on our website about applying for a U.S. Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) and how to make an appointment with us:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/child-family-matters/birth/>

Traveling this summer? Do you know your passport's expiration date?

Check your passport now - some countries require at least 6 months validity in order to enter!

UPCOMING CLOSURES



Ramadan/ Eid Al Fitr
May 13th to May 19th



Memorial Day
May 30th

For a full list of Embassy/Consulate closures, see our website:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar/>



For information on how to renew your U.S. passport in Saudi Arabia, see our website:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>

Visit travel.state.gov to see passport validity requirements for other countries.