

# RED, WHITE, & BLUE *SEA SANDS SERIES*

*AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER*

• April - June 2018 •



## *U.S. EMBASSY RIYADH*

American Citizen Services Public Hours:  
Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm  
Email: [RiyadhACS@state.gov](mailto:RiyadhACS@state.gov)  
Phone: (966)(11)488-3800

## *U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL JEDDAH*

American Citizen Services Public Hours:  
Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm  
Email: [JeddahACS@state.gov](mailto:JeddahACS@state.gov)  
Phone: (966)(12)667-0080

## *U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL DHAHRAN*

American Citizen Services Public Hours:  
Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:30 pm  
Email: [DhahranACS@state.gov](mailto:DhahranACS@state.gov)  
Phone: (966)(13)330-3200

# SIGN UP FOR SMS ALERTS

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Saudi Arabia are pleased to announce a new SMS Message service for U.S. citizens interested in receiving security-related alerts on their mobile phones. The service is optional. This does not replace the existing registration system with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), but is an option designed to give you one additional method to receive important emergency information. Security and other messages will continue to be released via STEP to your registered e-mail address.

Please note that the Embassy utilizes a third party contractor for this service and the phone number that you provide will be shared with this contractor. While the Embassy has taken precautions in selecting the provider, the Embassy cannot guarantee that your information will not be subject to unauthorized use or disclosure by the provider.

Also be aware that your own cellular service provider may impose fees that include, but are not limited to, the receipt of text messages and roaming service. The Embassy cannot reimburse you for any fees, and it is your responsibility to check with your provider regarding these.

If you wish to receive important announcements via text message, please enroll in our SMS Message System at:

<https://tinyurl.com/USKSAAAlerts>

-SMS alerts-  
Sign up now!

## COMING THIS SUMMER: THE AMERICAN LIAISON NETWORK

The U.S. Department of State is revamping our traditional warden program! The American Liaison Network (ALN) is designed to modernize and replace the traditional embassy warden program overseas. It will allow enhanced collaboration between U.S. Embassies/Consulates and Citizen Liaison Volunteers (CLVs, the term that will replace "wardens"). It will also improve our awareness of the issues facing U.S. citizens in each consular district and will strengthen our capacity to assist those citizens in the event of a crisis.

Stayed tuned for more information from your Embassy/Consulate as we work to roll out this exciting new program!



## IFTAR WITH OUR CITIZEN LIAISON VOLUNTEERS



Riyadh's American Citizen Services (ACS) unit hosted an Iftar for our Citizen Liaison Volunteers (CLVs), formerly known as wardens, on May 23. You can find more information on the U.S. Department of State's new CLV program, or American Liaison Network, on page two.

The CLVs were greeted by Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs Sean Murphy and briefed on security issues in the Kingdom by the Deputy Regional Security Officer. ACS Chief and Consular staff provided information on new ACS initiatives and explained the new American Liaison Network.

After the Maghrib prayer and when our Muslim colleagues had broken their fast, the evening concluded with a wonderful dinner as a thank you to our fantastic volunteers.

## MCCA MEETS WITH THE GENERAL DIRECTOR OF PRISONS



On April 17, Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs Sean Murphy met with the General Director of Prisons, Mohammed Bin Ali Al-Asmari. Through this meeting, the American Citizen Services unit was able to gain a better understanding of the organization of the Saudi prison system, as well as arrest and imprisonment procedures. Mr. Al-Asmari also explained the various rehabilitation programs offered to prisoners and their families.

One of the highest priorities of the Department of State and U.S. embassies and consulates abroad is to provide assistance to U.S. citizens incarcerated overseas. The American Citizen Services units at the Embassy and Consulates can help incarcerated citizens and their families within the limits of our authority in accordance with international, domestic, and foreign law.

For more information about services we can provide to U.S. citizens arrested in Saudi Arabia, please see our website: <https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/arrest-of-a-u-s-citizen/>.

# Happenings in Jeddah

## *Tips for Hajj from Jeddah's ACS Team*

Hajj is an annual religious pilgrimage to Mecca undertaken each year by 2-3 million people. The approximate dates for the 2018 Hajj are August 19 to August 26. Umrah is a pilgrimage that can be completed at any time of the year. Jeddah's ACS team is gearing up for Hajj season by meeting with Hajj tour providers and the Ministry of Hajj. Here is some important information to keep in mind during Hajj:

### **American Hajj Travelers in Saudi Arabia**

U.S. citizens who reside in Saudi Arabia and wish to participate in Hajj must travel with Saudi-government-approved sponsor groups to perform Hajj. Foreign Muslim residents of Saudi Arabia may perform the Hajj once every five years. Advance approval must be obtained from an immigration office and with the approval of your Saudi sponsor.

Keep travel documents (your U.S. passport or U.S. "green card" residency permit) secure during your trip. Make two copies of your passport—including pages stamped with Saudi visas—with one set at home and the other in a safe place while you travel.

### **Photographs**

Saudi authorities forbid the taking of photographs (still or video, including those taken with your phone) at the Holy Mosque at Mecca or at the Prophet's Mosque at Medina. Any violation of official instructions is likely to lead to the confiscation of your device. While a prior ban on cameras and camera phones has been relaxed, exercise good judgment and respect the rules of each site.

### **Additional Information**

For more information about Hajj, including emergency contact information, as well as what the U.S. Embassy and Consulates can do to assist Hajj travelers, please see the U.S. Department of State's website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/hajj-umrah.html>.

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## *Jeddah's Consul General Meets with NYPD and Hajj Tour Company*

On March 17, Consul General (CG) Matthias Mitman, along with Consular Section Chief Johann Schmonsees and the Jeddah ACS Chief, met with Dar Elsalam Tour Company and members of the New York Police Department (NYPD) Muslims Officers Society. This meeting was an opportunity for Consulate staff to strengthen our partnership with the Dar Elsalam Company, one of the largest facilitators of Hajj and Umrah visas for American citizens. The CG thanked Dar Elsalam for their role in providing Americans access in Saudi Arabia to fulfill their religious duties, and for working with the Consulate in providing assistance to American pilgrims in need.



# DHAHRAN NEWS

## MEETING WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS AT KING FAHD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

On March 19, Consulate General Dhahran met with senior Saudi officials from the Dammam Airport Company (DACO), Saudi General Directorate of Passports (Jawazat), and Immigration and Customs. The King Fahd Airport is considered the world's largest airport by land area, with a whopping 776 square kilometers of land within its zone. To put this visit in perspective, thousands of Americans living in the Eastern Province transit through the King Fahd International Airport. Consular Chief Vito DiPaola spoke about fraud prevention management related to visa applications. The Deputy Consular Chief briefed the Saudi officials on the range of citizen services provided by the U.S. Consulate to Americans in the Eastern Province. The Consulate staff was given a tour of the King Fahd International Airport facilities as well as the cargo handling and inspection areas. The visit further strengthens the U.S. Consulate's relationships with senior Saudi officials at the King Fahd Airport and advances the Consulate's mission of promoting the welfare and safety of Americans in the Eastern Province.



## CONSULATE DHAHRAN MEETS WITH AMERICANS AT NADA DAIRY FARMS

On March 21, Consular Officials accompanied Consul General (CG) Rachna Korhonen on an outreach visit to Nada Dairy Farms in Al-Hofuf. CG Korhonen welcomed the large group of attendees, and spoke about the U.S. Consulate's top priority of protecting the lives and interests of American citizens. The Deputy Consular Chief highlighted the range of services provided to Americans in the Eastern Province and provided insight into the Consulate's crisis management and emergency preparedness planning. One of the Consular Officers explained the process of applying for a non-immigrant visa to the United States and answered specific questions related to U.S. visas. The visit culminated with a tour of the Nada Farms and Processing Plant and a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Al Othman Holding Company and Board Members as well as the Nada Farm and Village Community.

# SAFETY & SECURITY



## UPDATED TRAVEL ADVISORY

The U.S. Department of State updated its Travel Advisory for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on April 16 to provide additional information about the security environment in the Kingdom. It can be found at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/SaudiArabia.html>



## SAFETY DURING MISSILE EVENTS

Due to the threat of missile attacks emanating from Yemen on civilian targets, all U.S. citizens should be aware of the safety procedures outlined in this notice when at work, at home, or in public:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-mission-saudi-arabia-safety-procedures-case-missile-strikes/>



## FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

In addition to the STEP messages we send via email, we post safety and security information on Twitter, as well as helpful information for U.S. citizens living in Saudi Arabia. To stay up-to-date on the latest ACS news, follow us:

**@KSA\_ACS**

# General Directorate of Traffic on Women Driving in Saudi



Women will be allowed  
to **drive trucks**

Women with licenses from Gulf  
countries can **convert** these  
to **Saudi licenses**



Women will be allowed to  
**ride motorcycles**



Women with **international driving licenses**  
will be allowed to drive in the Kingdom **without** the need  
**to go to local driving schools**

Women with international driving licenses visiting Saudi **will be able to drive for one year or till the expiry date** (whichever comes first) before needing to apply for a Saudi license

**The General Directorate** of Traffic complies  
with strict **anti-harassment laws** that will not  
tolerate **any harassment of female drivers**



**Women at different traffic checkpoints and women field inspectors to be recruited**



There will be no discrimination between  
men and women implementing  
**traffic laws and regulations**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development,  
the directorate **to make arrangements for women who violate traffic laws** to be detained at current women care centers

Licenses to drive private vehicles are granted  
**at the age of 18** and licenses to operate public  
service vehicles are granted **at the age of 20**

Do you have  
questions  
about the  
upcoming  
changes in  
Saudi Arabia  
allowing  
women to  
drive?

This brochure,  
created by the  
Center for  
International  
Communication,  
provides some  
helpful information.

For the latest news  
and most up-to-date  
information, see  
their website:  
<https://cic.org.sa/>

## ACS APPOINTMENTS

U.S. passport and notarial services are available by appointment only and generally offered from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

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 US. 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/>

## UPCOMING CLOSURES

### JUNE 17-21

EID - AL - FITR / RAMADAN - 1439 H

### JULY 04

INDEPENDENCE DAY

### AUGUST 20-23\*

HAJJ / EID - AL - ADHA - 1439 H

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

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

\*Exact dates subject to change

**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!



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](https://travel.state.gov) to see passport validity requirements for other countries.