

Consular Warden Message

June 25, 2008

U.S. Embassy Dakar

Recent Violence in Casamance

The U.S. Embassy in Dakar is issuing this Warden Message to inform U.S. citizens of a recent increase in violent incidents in the Casamance region. As noted in the Department of State's Consular Specific Information for Senegal, the U.S. Embassy recommends U.S. citizens defer nonessential travel to the Casamance region west of the city of Kolda, except direct air travel to the Cap Skirring resort area or to the city of Ziguinchor. If travel is deemed essential, the U.S. Embassy recommends that U.S. citizens carefully monitor the security situation before traveling and register their intended travel to this region with the Embassy prior to leaving.

On June 20, 2008, armed men, suspected to be members of the Movement of the Casamance Democratic Forces (MFDC), exchanged gunfire with Senegalese government soldiers, injuring one soldier in the process. The confrontation took place between Tendieme and Kouteghor, about 33 kilometers north of Ziguinchor. The exchange of gunfire followed an armed attack by the rebels on a vehicle conveying several civilians. One man was killed and a woman was injured in this attack.

On May 22, the media reported that armed men opened fire on cashew nut harvesters in the village of Baraka-Bounao, near the border with Guinea-Bissau. On May 20, 2008, fighting broke out between the Senegalese Army and members of the MFDC near Djibidjone in the southern region of the Casamance. According to news reports, seven rebels and two Senegalese soldiers were killed, and approximately 20 individuals were wounded. On May 7, some 15 – 20 cashew harvesters had their hands tied behind their backs and their left ears cut off with a machete. The Senegalese army declared that they would launch an offensive against rebels in the southern Casamance region after this incident, for which the MFDC denied responsibility.

U.S. citizens are reminded that the Gendarmes or police have responsibility to protect all persons situated in Senegal. If you are the victim of an armed assault, do not confront or fight the attacker. Once the assailant has departed the area,

immediately seek shelter and contact the local police. Be as detailed as possible when describing your location to minimize delays in response time.

Americans living or traveling in Senegal are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Dakar through the State Department's travel registration website, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Senegal. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located at Avenue Jean XXIII, Dakar; the mailing address is B.P. 49, Dakar, Senegal. The telephone number is (221) 33 829-2100; after-hours (221) 33 829-2209. The U.S. Embassy website is <http://dakar.usembassy.gov>.