

**CONSULAR NEWS  
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

**U.S. Embassy Dakar, Senegal  
March 2006**

**Town Meetings in Tambacounda and Ziguinchor**

The American Embassy will hold town hall meetings in March in both Tambacounda and Ziguinchor.

The Tambacounda town hall meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 13 at the bar of the Hotel Le Relais.

The Ziguinchor town hall meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14 at the home of Dennis Baker.

Staff from both the Consular Section and the Regional Security Office will be available for questions and answers. We also want to hear from you about safety and security issues so we can provide accurate information to other American travelers. If you plan to attend one of these town meetings, please let us know so we can ensure enough room.

**Crime Watch**

On Saturday, February 11 at approximately 3:45 at Lac Rose, a man robbed a female American and her male friend at knifepoint, stealing a vehicle as well as other items. The vehicle was located the next day approximately 8 miles from Lac Rose.

On Tuesday, February 14 at approximately 6:50 pm, two men approached an American woman who was walking alone on the path that runs north from Fenetre Mermoz behind the French military base along the ocean. One man asked for a match. The other man blocked the American's path, grabbed hold of her jacket, and held it. The American asked him if he was robbing her and his response was to keep holding onto the jacket as the taller fellow approached. At that time another expatriate approached with a dog and the men moved away. When the expatriate departed, the men again began to approach the American, who then ran to the paved road and flagged down a friend who happened to be driving by on the road, who was able to then drive her away from the area.

On Tuesday, February 14 an American woman and a teenage American girl had flagged a taxi near Score Mermoz. Just as they started to pull away, the American saw something she wanted to buy and asked the driver to stop the taxi, and to wait momentarily. After about five minutes they told him he could go, and offered a couple hundred francs for his trouble. This amount was not satisfactory and he asked for 500 CFA. Some discussion ensued, and the ladies selling vegetables by the side of the road tried to persuade them to pay 1,000 CFA, and that prompted the taxi driver to not be satisfied with anything less. The taxi man grabbed the girl's eyeglasses and hopped into his taxi, threatening to leave with them. The American woman got in the taxi so he would not leave with the glasses. He returned the glasses in exchange for 1,000 CFA.

## **Avian Flu Update**

These are CDC's recommendations to prevent risk of infection from Avian Influenza:

To help avoid illness, Americans living in areas where outbreaks of H5N1 among poultry or human H5N1 cases have been reported should observe the following measures. The recommendations are directed to U.S. embassies and consulates, their personnel, and U.S. citizens living abroad in areas where avian influenza A (H5N1) outbreaks among poultry or human H5N1 cases have been reported. These recommendations may be revised as more information becomes available.

1. Do not eat uncooked or undercooked poultry or poultry products, including dishes made with uncooked poultry blood.
2. As with other infectious illnesses, one of the most important preventive practices is careful and frequent hand washing. Clean your hands often, using either soap and water (or waterless, alcohol-based hand gels when soap is not available and hands are not visibly soiled) to remove potentially infectious materials from your skin and help prevent disease transmission.
3. CDC does not recommend the routine use of masks or other personal protective equipment while in public areas.
4. When Preparing Food separate raw meat from cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Do not use the same chopping board or the same knife for preparing raw meat and cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Do not handle either raw or cooked foods without washing your hands in between. Do not place cooked meat back on the same plate or surface it was on before it was cooked. All foods from poultry, including eggs and poultry blood, should be cooked thoroughly. Egg yolks should not be runny or liquid. Because influenza viruses are destroyed by heat, the cooking temperature for poultry meat should reach 70°C (158°F). Wash egg shells in soapy water before handling and cooking, and wash your hands afterwards. Do not use raw or soft-boiled eggs in foods that will not be cooked. After handling raw poultry or eggs, wash your hands and all surfaces and utensils thoroughly with soap and water.

If you believe you might have been exposed to avian influenza, take the following precautions:

1. Monitor your health for 10 days.
2. If you become ill with fever and develop a cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing or if you develop any illness with fever during this 10-day period, consult a health-care provider.
3. Before you visit a health-care setting, tell the provider the following: 1) your symptoms, 2) where you traveled, and 3) if you have had direct poultry contact with poultry.
4. Do not travel while ill, unless traveling locally for medical care. Limiting contact with others as much as possible can help prevent the spread of an infectious illness.

For more information about avian influenza, see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm>.

## **Staying Safe in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau**

The following information is taken from Peace Corps Senegal's crime awareness training:

Common sense and awareness are essential factors to ensure your personal safety. Always be aware of your surroundings, especially in large cities and crowded places such as markets and taxi parks. Keep a low profile, remain vigilant, and avoid potential conflict situations. Pay heightened attention to your environment and surroundings. Use common sense when faced with something out of the ordinary or if someone is following you.

When walking around town:

1. Do not carry original documents, such as your passport. Make photocopies.
2. Always carry identification. You can be detained up to 48 hours if you do not.
3. Do not carry credit cards unless you plan to use them that day
4. Do not carry excessive amounts of money. Carry only what you need or can afford to lose. Never “flash” money in public. Take money out discretely when you need to access it especially when in public places. Carry money in several different places on your person, not just in your wallet or purse.
5. Do not accept gifts from anyone for any reason. It’s a common scam here.
6. Pickpockets are endemic to Dakar. If you are touched or grabbed anywhere, immediately spin 180° opposite the side of the touch/grab. Confront the pickpocket. Surprise will be on your side. Secure your wallet/purse and quickly leave the scene.
7. Lock up all of your valuables when you stay in a hotel or other public place. When checking in, prepay your hotel stay in cash. Lock valuables in the hotel’s safe (in a well-taped envelope) or in a difficult to access suitcase. Do not leave money out in the open or an otherwise accessible place.
8. Purchase and use traveler’s checks when traveling. They are available at banks in Dakar or regional capitals and cost 1.500 FCFA per 100.000 FCFA. It’s better to spend a few FCFA for insurance than lose a lot of cash. You can cash them in at banks. You can buy Euro or Dollar equivalents, depending where you are going.
9. Do not wear expensive jewelry, especially necklaces, which can be grabbed and yanked. Even costume jewelry can be tempting. Keep jewelry out of sight and safe.
10. Avoid isolated areas of the city and be extra careful at beaches.
11. If you see a big crowd gathering, avoid it.
13. If it is late at night, take a taxi. Better to pay a little than to risk losing a lot more.
14. Beware –very aware – about accepting favors from strangers.

If you are a victim of a crime, maintain a calm mature approach. Report the crime immediately to the police and also notify the U.S. Embassy Consular Section at 823-4296 ext. 2204 or [consulardakar@state.gov](mailto:consulardakar@state.gov). For after-hours emergencies, please call 637-9566.

### **Consular Hours**

Routine American citizen services are available Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Please come to window number two.

Emergency American citizen services are available during U.S. Embassy normal working hours. For an after-hours emergency involving an American citizen, please call 637-9566.

**Have You Left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau?**

If you have left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau, please e-mail us at [consulardakar@state.gov](mailto:consulardakar@state.gov) so we can remove your name from the warden registration database. If you would like to remain on the newsletter mailing list, please indicate this in your e-mail.