CRIME

YAOUNDÉ

- Petty crime is reportedly on the rise in the capital city Yaoundé, especially along the Avenue Kennedy.

- Petty crime is mostly attributed to youth gangs who frequently target people during traffic jams. Chauffeured cars and taxis are the most targeted. According to media reports, the number of youth gangs have increased over the past few months due to the displacement of several people fleeing insecurity in the Far North region.

- Crime rates have a tendency to rise during the back-to-school period in September. Items with a high demand on the black market are most commonly stolen, such as electronics (smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc) and jewelry.

- Petty crime - purse snatching, pickpocketing, burglaries and thefts, more frequent at lower budget guesthouses than more expensive hotels.

- Criminals may specifically target foreign nationals, due to their perceived affluence and on the assumption that they are likely to be carrying such items.

- Foreign visitors and residents can be targeted by scam artists. The scams come in many forms and can cause significant financial loss.

EASTERN PART OF CAMEROON – IN PARTICULAR CLOSE TO CAR BORDER

- Reports of criminality including large armed gangs and highway bandits, stopping travelers, taking hostages and demanding payment,

- There are frequent instances of violence in CAR spilling across the border to Cameroon

ADVICE

- Individuals, particularly in Yaoundé, are advised to remain vigilant and take common-sense precautions against petty crime (e.g., drive with doors locked and windows rolled up, park in a secured parking lot close to their destination, avoid traveling by foot after nightfall, only keep small amounts of cash on hand).
SOCIOPOLITICAL UNREST

- Protests’ and strikes common among the Anglophone community in the Southwest and Northwest region where separatists have attempted to create the state of Ambazonia. Protests can turn violent. The worst of the unrest has been experienced in Manyu where several countries issued travel warnings to their citizens.

- The 1 October will be the first anniversary of the separatists’ declaration of independence of “Ambazonia”, during which at least 8 people were killed last year by security forces. It is possible that further protests will take place this year and that these may turn violent. The areas most affected by these protests in the past have been Bamenda, Ndop and Kumbo. Demonstrations against the separatists have also taken place in Duala.

- Since the beginning of 2018, Anglophone secessionists have been increasingly targeting civilians and civil servants whereas their attacks were previously oriented towards Cameroonian security forces.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

- Presidential elections are planned for 7 October; Cameroon’s opposition is fractured, and, like in past elections, no candidate with a mass following has emerged. Until now, the country has not seen presidential election in which the opposition has had a fair chance of taking power.

- Many observers believe that political transition in Cameroon is likely to result only when Biya dies or is removed from office by a military coup d’état.

- Election violence is likely. Some election-related protests could turn violent and the military has a record of firing on unarmed protesters.

ADVICE

- Individuals in Southwest and Northwest regions are advised to closely monitor the situation, obey all instructions issued by the local authorities (particularly curfews), and avoid protests or large gatherings due to the risk of associated violence.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

- Cameroon rated 28 (high) on the World Rankings Calculations.

- The main causes of fatal crashes are mechanical failures (28%), two-thirds being tyre problems, hazardous overtaking (23%), and excessive speed (20%).

ADVICE

- Individuals are advised to hire cars from reputable car companies only.
TERRORISM

- There are several terrorist groups active in the region. These include Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Islamic State West Africa (ISWA), Islamic State Greater Sahara (ISGS), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Murabitoun, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram.

- These groups are capable of carrying out attacks and kidnaps over long distances.

- Kidnapping for ransom is the primary source of finance for Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM).

- Criminal gangs also carry out kidnapping for terrorist groups in return for financial rewards.

- Boko Haram mostly active in Far North region but attacks could occur anywhere including major towns and cities such as Yaoundé and Douala.

- Approximately 60 suicide attacks, often involving children, were carried out in 2017, 50% more than the previous year.

KIDNAPPING

- There is a heightened threat of kidnap for foreigners in the north of Cameroon, including in the major cities and along the border between the Far North region and Nigeria, Adamawa, East, North West and South West regions.

- Boko Haram has publicly threatened Cameroon with attacks and further kidnappings due to Cameroon’s involvement in the regional fight to counter Boko Haram.

- Locals are mostly targeted; though internationals have known to be victims: a Tunisian national employed by a construction company kidnapped in Southwest region in March 18 was killed during rescue operation.

ADVICE

- Individuals are advised to remain aware of the threat of kidnapping and hostage taking for ransom and take adequate precautionary measures.

- Some Western governments advise against travel to the Far North region as well as other areas bordering Nigeria, Chad, and the Central African Republic; travel to these areas should only be considered with appropriate security protocols in place.