

# RED, WHITE, & BLUE

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*AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER*

• July - September 2019 •



*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  
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  
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

# A message from the Ambassador



**John P. Abizaid was sworn in as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on April 30, 2019. He arrived in Riyadh on Thursday, May 2.**

As-salamu alaykum! It is a pleasure to address you, private American citizens in Saudi Arabia, through this newsletter. My wife Kathy and I arrived in May, and we have had the great pleasure of meeting some of you in person, and we look forward to meeting more of you in the future as we travel about the Kingdom. Next year we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is a great honor for me to represent the United States in the Kingdom at this important and exciting time.

My number one priority as Ambassador is to ensure the safety and security of all Americans in Saudi Arabia. My team and I, at the Embassy in Riyadh, and at the Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran, monitor the security situation in the Kingdom and across the region very closely every day. Our goal is to provide you with the services and the information you need to make your stay in the Kingdom as safe and as productive as possible. I would like to ask your help in this. If you received this message, it is because you registered in the Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. I need your help to spread the word to other Americans and encourage them to register in STEP. There are Citizen Liaison Volunteers (wardens) across the country who perform a vital role as intermediaries between the U.S. Mission and the private American community. If you would like to become a Volunteer or find out who the CLV is in your region, please let us know. If you have feedback, questions, or concerns, please reach out through the contact information listed in this newsletter. Together, let's do all we can to keep ourselves safe.

Whether you are in Saudi Arabia to work, because of family ties, or for another reason, you represent the United States every day to the Saudis and others with whom you come in contact. These people-to-people ties are the true foundation of our relationship. I am very grateful for all you do for the U.S.-Saudi relationship and I look forward to meeting you.

*John P. Abizaid*

The Embassy of the United States of America  
and

*Ambassador John P. Abizaid*

*cordially invite you to a*

# Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, September 12, 2019

5:30 p.m - 8:00 p.m.

U.S. Embassy Riyadh

More information about the Town Hall will be forthcoming so please ensure you are registered with our Smart Traveler Enrollment Program in order to receive the invitation.

\*\*\* This event is for adult American passport holders only. \*\*\*

We look forward to seeing you!



## 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\*

# 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 2019 Hajj are August 9 to August 14. 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:

## Americans 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. 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.

## What We Can Do

We hope that you will have a trouble-free Hajj or Umrah, as thousands of other pilgrims from the United States do each year. If something does go wrong, however, the Consulate General in Jeddah can provide you appropriate consular services, such as:

- Arrange for emergency U.S. passports and "boarding foils" for lost I-551 ("green cards") for U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents. After Hajj, please bring a report from the police station regarding the theft or loss, and a copy of your U.S. passport or green card.
- Make special arrangements in case of civil disturbances or disasters.
- Seek to contact you within 24 hours of being told that you have been arrested.
- Provide contact information for local lawyers and hospitals.
- Arrange for a spouse or next of kin to be informed if you are involved in an accident, arrested, or die, and advise them on the appropriate procedures.

## What We Cannot Do

- Arrange for travel outside of the designated areas in Mecca and Medina.
- Resolve immigration violations.
- Become involved in any disagreements, e.g. pilgrim and travel agency disputes or lost baggage.
- Rearrange airline, hotel, or other travel bookings.
- Pay for hotel, legal, medical, travel, or other bills.
- Obtain someone's release from prison.
- Provide legal advice or intervene in court cases or criminal investigations.

## Emergency Contact Information for U.S. Citizens

U.S. Consulate General Jeddah: (966) (12) 667-0080

Normal hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm local time in Saudi Arabia, Sunday through Thursday for routine inquiries. During regular business hours, please ask for the American Citizens Services Unit. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates General will be closed for routine services August 11-15.

For emergency cases outside of regular business hours or during holidays, use the same numbers listed above to reach a duty officer for assistance.

In addition, you can call the Department of State from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays):

From the U.S. & Canada: +1-888-407-4747  
From Overseas: +1-202-501-4444





Exercise increased caution in Saudi Arabia due to terrorism and the threat of missile and drone attacks on civilian targets.

Do not travel to within 50 miles of the border with Yemen due to terrorism and armed conflict.

Terrorist groups continue plotting possible attacks in Saudi Arabia. Terrorists may attack with little or no warning, targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets/shopping malls, and local government facilities. Terrorists have targeted both Saudi and Western government interests, mosques and other religious sites (both Sunni and Shia), and places frequented by U.S. citizens and other Westerners.

Rebel groups operating in Yemen have fired missiles and rockets into Saudi Arabia, specifically targeting populated areas and civilian infrastructure; they have publicly stated their intent to continue doing so. Missile attacks have targeted major cities such as Riyadh and Jeddah, Riyadh's international airport, Saudi Aramco facilities, and vessels in Red Sea shipping lanes.

Rebel groups are also in possession of unmanned aerial systems (armed drones) which they have used to target civilian infrastructure and military facilities in Saudi Arabia; the airport in Abha, in southeastern Saudi Arabia, has been a frequent target of attack. U.S. citizens living and working near such installations, particularly in areas near the border with Yemen, are at heightened risk of missile and drone attack.

The U.S. government has limited ability to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens in the following locations, as U.S. Mission personnel and their families are restricted from travel to:

- Within 50 miles of the Saudi-Yemen border, including the cities of Jizan and Najran, and
- Qatif in the Eastern province and its suburbs, including Awamiyah.

U.S. Mission personnel and their families are not permitted to use the airport in Abha without Chief of Mission approval.



### *For more information:*

- Read the full Saudi Arabia Travel Advisory at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#)
- Follow us on [Twitter](#)
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

# *UPCOMING CLOSURES*

The U.S. Embassy and  
Consulates in Saudi  
Arabia will be closed:

## **AUG. 11-15**

HAJJ/EID-AL-ADHA-1440H

## **SEPT. 01**

IN OBSERVANCE OF LABOR  
DAY

## **SEPT. 23**

SAUDI NATIONAL DAY

## **OCT. 13**

IN OBSERVANCE  
OF COLUMBUS DAY



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[https://sa.usembassy.gov/  
u-s-citizen-services/](https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/)



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