



PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION
PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY GUIDANCE
COP 27 – SHARM EL SHEIKH
06 -18TH NOVEMBER 2022

Current as of: 16/10/22

1. Overview

The 2022 UN Climate Change Conference, COP 27, will take place on the South Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, from the 06 to 18th November 2022. A number of ACT Alliance member organizations, along with ACT Secretariat representatives, will take part. The event will primarily take place within the Sharm El Sheikh resort and conference centre.

2. Risk Assessment

Country Risk Rating: Overall – HIGH 3.50

Egypt is rated as Country Risk Category 3.50: Meaning, HIGH RISK.

Sharm El Sheikh Risk Rating: Overall – MODERATE 3.25

Sharm El Sheikh is rated as 3.25: Meaning, MODERATE RISK.

3. Egypt Overview

Overall, security in Egypt has improved in recent years but the country features a complex threat environment that is geographically variable. While tourist centres like Cairo, Alexandria, and Luxor are largely safe to visit, the Sinai Peninsula and some southern and western border regions are prone to instability and militancy.

Islamic State (IS) suicide and car bomb attacks have targeted Coptic churches, government facilities, and security forces in North Sinai, South Sinai, Cairo, the Western Desert, and Nile Delta cities. Foreigners have also been targeted, the last time in 2015. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have been planted and detonated at transportation hubs and other public areas.

Petty crime is a concern in most major urban areas, and this can take the form of harassment, muggings, and pickpocketing. Carjackings are reported with some frequency in major cities. Western women have reported sexual harassment. Protests are effectively illegal under the regime of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, yet they still occur, often in response to austerity measures and a continued government crackdown on civil society. While socioeconomic factors and government opposition are drivers for civil and labour unrest, security forces are swift to

clamp down on any gatherings. Strikes can disrupt commerce, transportation, and public services. Corruption is also prevalent in Egypt's political, military, commercial, and regulatory environments.

4. Sharm El Sheikh Overview

Sharm el-Sheikh is a popular tourist town that borders the Red Sea on the southern coast of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The town has seen a fall in international visitors since a crash incident involving a Russian airliner in October 2015 that is thought to have been caused by an explosive device. In November 2019, a new road connecting Cairo to Sharm el-Sheikh via Suez and El Tor was inaugurated, reducing the journey distance to 342km (212mi). The road is equipped with military checkpoints and medical facilities.

Despite developing a reputation for insecurity following the 2015 incident, most visits to Sharm el-Sheikh are trouble-free if security precautions are taken. Petty crime is the greatest threat faced by travellers. The primary tourist locations, including Na'ama Bay, Nabq Bay, crowded markets, and public transportation systems are attractive areas for thieves. Criminals may try to steal valuables from unsuspecting travellers around hotels and on beaches. Women can be subject to unwanted attention or verbal harassment if traveling alone. Violent crime is rare and the kidnap risk for foreigners is low in resort areas. However, these risks are elevated when using rural desert roads to travel to and from Sharm el-Sheikh.

There exists a terror threat due to its proximity to the north Sinai region, which is affected by instability and the presence of Islamic militants. The Islamic State-affiliated Wilayat Sinai group, which was responsible for the downing of the Russian jetliner in 2015, continues to make threats against tourists. Increased security measures, including checkpoints and patrols, are in place at the airport and in resort areas. Major hotels are well-protected, and public areas where tourists congregate, like restaurants or smaller hotels, are likely to be more vulnerable to IED or shooting attacks.

There have been no recent reports of demonstrations, and security is in place to insulate areas frequented by international travellers from potential unrest. Residents and the authorities are eager to maintain stability to attract foreign investment and tourists. Any civil unrest is usually driven by a reaction to austerity measures and labour-related grievances. It is almost certain that the security forces will contain any protests. Police officers are responsive to travellers in need of assistance and can speak some English. There is no intelligence to suggest that COP27 will see direct protest from the populous.

5. COVID 19 Entry requirements Covid 19 entry requirements were lifted on the 17th June 2022.

Staff must check their national government website for travel advice and their country specific pages for the latest Covid advisories which may include information on travel restrictions, quarantine, COVID -19 testing or vaccination requirements. This includes considering the recommendations and requirements for any transit countries.

Please make sure you check the following two websites – International Air Transport Association (IATA) COVID Advise Tool and travel updates and Sherpa.

<https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/world.php>

<https://apply.joinsherpa.com/travel-restrictions?affiliateId=diversitytravel&language=en-US>

Please ensure you double check the travel guidance for your destination at least 48 hours before travelling, as restrictions may change since your booking was made. Case numbers can rise rapidly, and healthcare capacity and country requirements can change at short notice.

6. Entry Information and Visa Process

Most countries require visitors to obtain a visa that is obtained prior to entering the country. In limited cases a visa may be obtained on arrival. It is your responsibility, as the traveller, to contact the consular representative of Egypt to enquire whether you need a visa, the visa type, requirements, procedure and application. It is also your responsibility to confirm whether your visa permits you to work. In some places it may not. Governments do change visa requirements from time to time. The visa cost is in the region of USD \$25.00

7. Immunization

It is important to check your immunizations are up to date and travel with proof of these. Health officials periodically monitor arriving passengers arriving from specific countries. Egypt has the highest of HCV (Hepatitis C) in the world, with 10% of its population 15-59 years of age being chronically infected.

To ensure that you have up to date information regarding immunizations before travelling, please check the following website and then search for Egypt. This website includes information for pregnant women and a world map to identify areas of Zika risk, which can cause serious birth defects. Pregnant women should consider seeking medical advice prior to travel.

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>

<https://www.who.int/travel-advice/vaccines>

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

8. Embassy Registration

If it is the case that you intend to stay more than x14 calendar days in Egypt, you may wish to consider registering with the passport authorities and also with your embassy in Egypt. This may enable you to access some services and support which would otherwise not be available to you. Please check your respective national requirements for registration at Embassies when travelling and what services you may be entitled to (including which Embassy may provide services to you if your country does not have an Embassy in Egypt). A list of Embassies and consulates located in Egypt can be found at: <https://www.embassypages.com/egypt>

9. Climate

The temperature in Sharm El Sheikh is moderate ranging from 15 to 40 Celsius throughout the year. Summer normally starts in May and winter starts in November. Temperatures are oppressive in summer between (May to October). Currently, temperatures are ranging between 28 & 32 Celsius.

10. Food

Mains water is normally chlorinated, and while relatively safe, will cause abdominal upset. You should therefore use bottled water only. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot.

Pork, salad, and mayonnaise may carry an increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked, and fruit peeled. Drinking water outside main cities and towns carries a greater risk and should always be sterilized.

Communications, mobile phone networks and internet

Egypt is well connected to all international destinations through a fairly modern communication system. Internet connection is available at your hotel – usually free Wi-Fi is found in hotel lobbies. Most cell phone systems function in Egypt and you can purchase a local SIM card for your phone.

For international calls, please dial 00 and the country code. To call Egypt from overseas, please dial **+20**

It is recommended that you buy a reputable sim/data at the airport as a back-up as the hotel and conference WiFi facilities are likely to be under severe strain during COP27. The event will likely see the largest influx and increase in populous that Sharm El Sheikh has ever had to manage.

11. Ticket confirmation

Please confirm your return flight with your airline prior to outbound departure.

12. Electricity & Plugs

Voltage in Egypt is 220/240 volts. Electricity sockets accept either two prong circular plugs or three prong British plugs (less common). Telephone sockets are the same as in the US.

13. Medical Insurance

An important note about medical coverage. Each traveller is expected to have his or her respective medical evacuation insurance coverage information with them.

14. Identified threats and level of risk

Terrorism: Other than North, Middle Sinai and Wahat Area in the western desert and issues on the western borders, the threat level is moderate to high.

In general travellers, can mitigate the risks by avoiding political gatherings and demonstrations. All police, military, judicial and governmental installations should be avoided. Do not take photographs of these! Extra caution should be exercised near banks, mobile stores, and crowded public areas that are popular with foreigners such as markets, nightclubs, restaurants, touristic sites and cafes.

Crime: There has been a noticeable uptick in criminal activity lately in large urban areas. Sharm El Sheikh however, will have an increased security presence for COP27 to enhance your safety and security. Several cases of armed robbery, theft and kidnapping have been reported. This uptick can be linked to the economic situation and repeated increase in prices and unemployment.

Sexual violence and assault are becoming a growing problem in Egypt. Sexual violence including gang rape has occurred in the past, especially in gathering or mass celebrations. Avoid walking alone in remote areas and avoid large gatherings and protests. These are a key factor to avoid being a victim. Do not travel to the western desert region.

Civil unrest: Demonstrations are possible in Sharm El Sheikh and other cities. It is important to consider the economic conditions that are often the catalyst for these. Recently, the government initiated a campaign the purpose of which is to restore the illegally seized lands and buildings

erected without permission especially in agriculture areas along the Nile valley. The police control the situation well, and proactively deploy troops ahead of any public events.

Hazards: Egypt has a poor record on road traffic crashes. Poor road conditions, careless driving and not adhering to traffic regulations are among some of the causes. It is estimated that around 12,000 people die from road crashes in Egypt every year!

Egypt is susceptible to occasional earthquakes; the last major one was in 1992. The last recorded one was in October 2021 measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale. No casualties were reported.

Border Areas:

Border areas with neighbouring countries are subject to military operations to combat trafficking activities. Do not travel to these areas. The border areas are often porous, bandits and armed groups operate here. Avoid all travel to the western desert region.

15. Do's and don'ts:

Do:

- Avoid areas of demonstrations, even if apparently peaceful.
- Avoid all Police/Military, judicial and governmental installations.
- Always walk in pairs in the evening. Women are advised to not walk unaccompanied.
- Exercise caution in public areas in the vicinity of Coptic Churches and Mosques – particularly around the time of services, e.g. Friday prayers.
- Comply with instructions from local security authorities, they may assist you in some areas (e.g tourist locations). Cooperate fully with officials.
- Your hotel has been assessed and should have adequate access control and perimeter security. However, it is advised to still check this yourself.
- Immediately report any suspicious behaviour, suspicious packages/objects to the authorities.
- Be respectful of cultural norms in relation to dress and your behaviour. Dress conservatively.
- Adopt a low profile in the street and avoid wearing expensive jewellery.
- Outside of your working day, it is advisable to share your movements/destination with a trusted colleague, in order that you may be traced.
- Traffic regulation is poor, exercise caution when crossing roads.
- Only carry a small amount of cash on you.
- It is advisable to keep a paper copy of your passport on you.
- If you need to change currency, do so at an authorized exchange or reputable bank.
- If you have valuables, a wallet/purse, or passport do make use of the room or hotel safes.
- Familiarize yourself with the available emergency escape routes from your hotel room in the event of an emergency or fire.
- Use the door chain whenever you are in your room.
- Periodically monitor media/news.
- Wear a seat belt when travelling in any vehicle

Don't:

- Do not take a taxi alone, except through your hotel. UBER and CAREEM services may be available (you may share your trip with a person you trust "Track Ride"). However, Uber and Careem taxi services are not recommended for official journeys/travel as they do not have appropriate insurance coverage. It is best to arrange transport through your hotel and if transferring from the airport, use an approved taxi or shuttle bus.
- Do not use public transport.
- Do not leave Sharm El Sheikh and the resort curtilage at night, if possible. Where possible all travel should be during daylight hours.
- **Do not travel under any circumstances to North Sinai. This includes the Taba-Suez Road. There exists a high threat of terrorist attack and a high risk of criminality. Do not travel to the Wahat area in the west desert region, the security situation in this region has deteriorated.**
- Do not take photos of military or police installations, or of personnel. It is strictly prohibited.
- In the event of an attempted robbery, do not resist. Doing so may escalate the situation.
- Be alert to over friendly locals whose true motivation may be robbery.

16. Culture and customs

Egyptians are not known for their punctuality. Egypt is a largely conservative society and so staff are advised to dress modestly, especially in rural areas, mosques, and local markets. Public displays of affection are frowned upon.

It is advisable to avoid discussing sensitive political issues.

Alcohol is available at most hotels and some restaurants. However, drinking in the street and anywhere other than a licenced restaurant or bar should be avoided.

17. Gender Security

Women are advised to take extra caution if travelling alone (it is recommended not to) as there have been cases of harassment and sexual assault. Egypt has a poor reputation for sexual harassment. More serious but perhaps less common, include being followed, minor groping in crowds, or in closed-in spaces. The best response to verbal harassment is to keep moving and ignore the attention. Women may also attract more aggressive street begging.

Please note, the Egyptian Government refuses currently to recognise the existence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & intersex (LGBTQi) people, thereby disregarding and absolving its responsibility to protect the rights of all.

<https://rightsafrika.com/2020/03/08/repression-in-egypt-92-lgbtqi-arrests-last-year/>

<https://ilga.org/>

Egyptian law does not explicitly criminalize homosexuality, but it does have several provisions that criminalize any behaviour or the expression of any idea that is deemed to be immoral, scandalous, or offensive to the teachings of a recognized religious belief.

If you have concerns about how your perceived gender may increase your vulnerability in this context, please reach out to your security advisor/coordinator who can discuss and assist you with personal mitigations to reduce this risk.

18. Medical Care

The level of medical care generally available in Egypt is poor. Any serious case will require international evacuation. **Medical facilities outside Cairo can be basic and in case of emergency, you are advised to seek treatment in Cairo.** You should ensure that your medical insurance covers the cost of local hospitalization and medical repatriation to your country of residence.

Avoid public hospitals in Cairo. Several private hospitals in Cairo are generally well equipped and accustomed to treating foreigners. They can be significantly more expensive, but the level of care is much higher.

Available hospitals in Sharm El Sheikh

- Sharm El Sheikh International Hospital
El Salam Road
Tel. (069) 366 - 0893/4/5
- Pyramid Sharm International Hospital
Sinai Clinic – 2 Banks Street, Habada.
Tel. (069) 366 – 0893
- South Sinai Hospital
10 Ras kemedi – Peace Road
Tel. 0100 – 521 – 3283
- El Salam Hospital
Corniche Road, Hurghada
Tel. (065) 361 – 5012/13/15

19. Host Country Emergency Services

Police 122
Ambulance 123
Police Bomb Squad / Fire 180

20. Hospitals in Cairo

- Saudi German Hospital, Cairo
Joseph Teto St,
Nozha, Heliopolis,
Cairo 47
Egypt
Hotline: 16259 Or, 02-2625-2400
Info@sghcairo.com

- As-Salam International Hospital, Cairo

Hotline: 19885

Nile Corniche,

INFO@ASSIH.COM

Athar an Nabi

Email: expats@assih.com

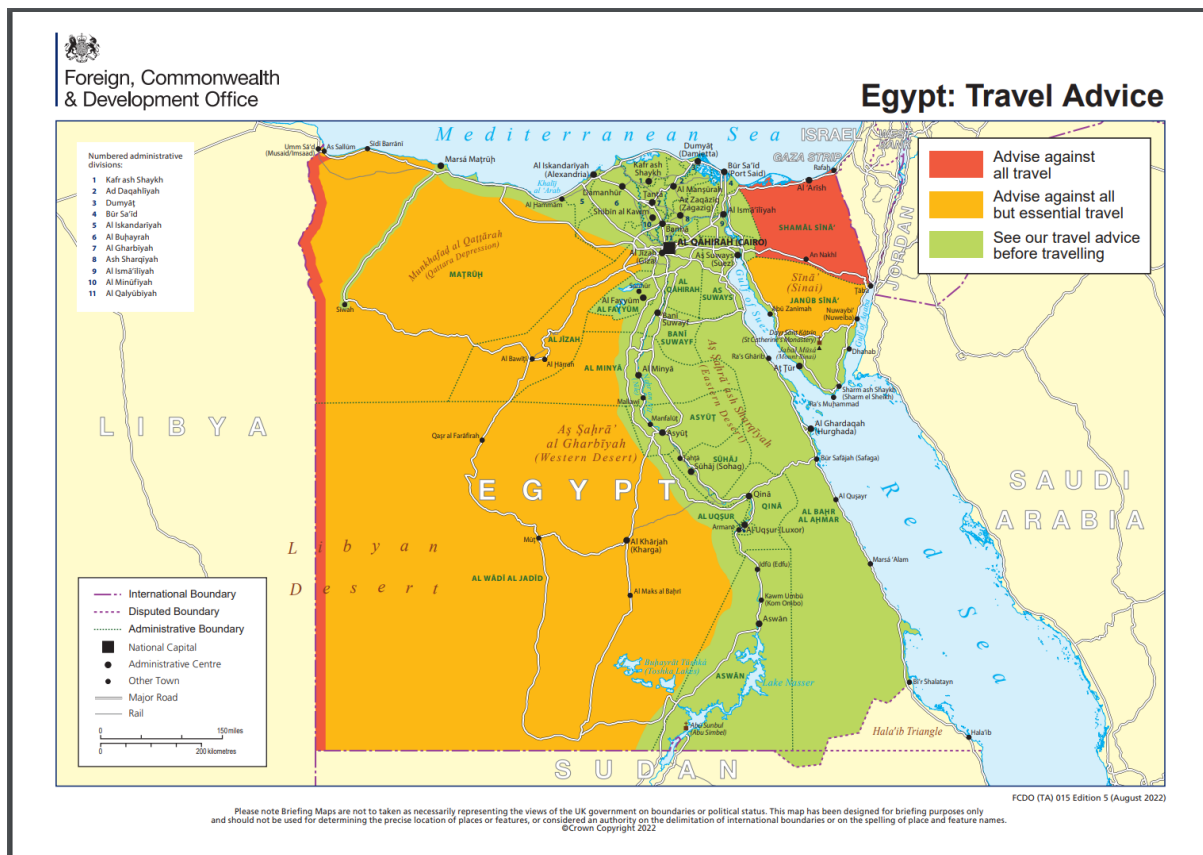
Cairo

Mobile +201 092 223 676

Egypt

+201 000 938 453

21. Map



Prepared by

Daniel Elliott – Security Coordinator ASG & ACT Alliance