Democratic Republic of the Congo

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax®, a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers’ health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Democratic Republic of the Congo is a developing nation in the lowest 25% of the world's economies. Located in central Africa, its climate is tropical but varies throughout the country.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

Requirement: A vaccination certificate is required for all travelers 9 months of age and older.

Official Status: listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal meningitis, rabies, typhoid fever, or a one time polio booster if you haven't previously received one for travel. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—International Travel and Health (current online update, Country List)

(2016) Malaria risk due predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year in the whole country.

- Recommended prevention: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) a

  aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand–by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—Health Information for International Travel (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: All

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Moderate
- Drug resistance**: Chloroquine
- Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 90%, *P. ovale* 5%, *P. vivax* rare
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine.

  **Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.
Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea
High risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases
African trypanosomiasis, chikungunya, dengue, West Nile virus and Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks
Additional concerns include Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, Ebola virus disease, Marburg virus disease, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis.

Consular Advice
The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice
Due to military conflict and ongoing security concerns, Canada (GAC) advises against travel to eastern and northeastern areas, the provinces of Kasai, Kasai-Central, and Kasai-Oriental, and nonessential travel to the rest of this country. Australia (DFAT) concurs. U.S. (DOS) advises against nonessential travel to this country. U.K. (FCO) advises against travel or nonessential travel to more limited areas.

Terrorism Risk
High risk of attack by domestic terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially in northern and eastern provinces (including North Kivu and South Kivu). Targets may include domestic and international organizations and businesses.

High risk of kidnapping by terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially in North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Haut-Lomami, Ituri, Bas-Uele, and Haut-Uele provinces. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), nongovernmental organization workers, missionaries, and aid workers.

Crime
High risk of violent crime (armed robbery and carjacking) and petty crime exists throughout the country, especially in Kinshasha and the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu.

Scams involving gems, precious metals, and false identity (such criminals posing as police officers or pre-arranged drivers) have been reported.

Civil Unrest
Protests and demonstrations occur throughout the country, especially in Kinshasa and other cities, and are generally peaceful, but have the potential to turn violent without warning. Risk of spontaneous demonstration is elevated in advance of December 2017 elections. Road closures and transportation delays, including flights via N'djili International Airport, may occur. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur. Monitor local media and foreign embassy communications in anticipation of demonstrations.

Unsafe Areas
The general security situation in the country is dangerous and unstable, with persisting armed conflict, the impossibility for the Congolese government and United Nations observation forces to impose order throughout the territory, and endemic criminality.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group originating in northern Uganda, operates in northeastern DRC.

The situation in the Kivus remains very tense and uncertain; local businesses and services, including the airport, are often disrupted in these provinces. Occasional fighting between the March 23 Movement (M23) and the Congolese army occurs, including close to Goma.

The borders with Angola, Rwanda, and Burundi can close at short notice.

**Transportation Safety**

Significant risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is > 24 per 100,000 population, the highest risk category. Carefully assess the safety of transportation options before any road travel. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Driving at night is not advised. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark.

Traffic flows on the right-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

**Natural Disasters**

The rainy season extends from April to October in the north and November to March in the south. DRC is located in an active seismic area. Volcanic eruptions are common.

**Consular Information**

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Democratic Republic of the Congo

- United States: [+243] 081-5560-151; kinshasa.usembassy.gov
- Canada: [+243] 99-60-21-500; canadainternational.gc.ca/congo
- United Kingdom: [+243] 081-556-6200; ukindrc.fco.gov.uk/en/
- Australia: Australia does not have an embassy or consulate in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Democratic Republic of the Congo's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.ambarcdcusa.org
- In Canada: [+1] 613-230-6391
- In the U.K.: ambardc-londres.gouv.cd
- In Australia: Democratic Republic of the Congo does not have an embassy or consulate in Australia.

**Visa/HIV Testing**

Visa applicants may need to meet specific requirements. Review the application and contact the appropriate embassy or consulate with questions. The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of DRC.

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