

TURKEY RISK ASSESSMENT

City & Country	TURKEY Istanbul	Prepared by	Sussex Abroad Office
Dates of travel	August 2015 to July 2016	Date	Updated 12 August 2015
Students affected	Study abroad students going to Koç University		

Before you go -

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides travel advice by country. It covers safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements, health and natural disasters along with a host of other useful information. We strongly recommend that students read the section related to their destination prior to departure and before undertaking any trip to another part of the county/region.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/>

The FCO advise against all travel to within 10 km of the border with Syria. The FCO advises against all but essential travel to the Sirnak, Mardin, Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Siirt, Tunceli, Hakkari, Kilis and Hatay provinces. You should be especially vigilant when travelling in other provinces in south eastern Turkey eg. including in Van, Bitlis, Bingol, Elazig, Mus, Batman, Erzincan, Diyarbakir and Agri.



VISA REGULATIONS

British nationals need a visa to enter Turkey. If you hold a different type of British nationality (BN(O), British Overseas Citizen, British Protected Person or British Subject), or another nationality altogether, check visa requirements with the Turkish Embassy before you travel. Arranging your visa before you travel will avoid possible problems or delays at the Turkish border, or when boarding your flight in the UK.

Make sure your passport has a blank page for the visa stamp. If it does not, the Turkish authorities will issue an 'Entry-Exit form' and put your entry-exit stamp on there. You should carry this form with you in Turkey and present it to the border officers when you leave. Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry into Turkey and have at least 3 months validity from the date you are leaving Turkey.

PASSPORT VALIDITY

Make sure your passport satisfies all of the following criteria:

- valid for a minimum of 6 months from the date of entry into Turkey
- valid for at least 3 months from the date you leave Turkey
- valid for at least 60 days beyond the expiry date of your visa, e-visa or residence permit (visas and e-visas are often issued with 6 months validity so your passport may need to have 8 months validity at the time your visa is issued).

The Turkish authorities have confirmed they will accept British passports extended by 12 months by British Embassies and Consulates under additional measures put in place in mid-2014.

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HEALTH

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), is NOT valid in Turkey. Make sure you have comprehensive travel and health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

CURRENCY

The currency in Turkey is the Turkish Lira. ATMs are widely available in major cities and tourist areas. You can get local currency from banks and exchange bureaux, known as DOVIZ in Turkish. Always check for additional exchange fees when converting currency to ensure that you are getting the best rates.

Type	Nature of the Hazards	Procedures to minimise risks
<p><u>Terrorism</u></p>	<p>There is a high threat from terrorism in Turkey and a number of terrorist groups remain active in the country. Statements have been made in the press indicating that attacks could take place against tourists or places used by foreigners. Media reports suggest that terrorists could target areas throughout Turkey, including Ankara, Istanbul and areas close to the Syrian border.</p> <p>Following a suicide bombing in the Sultanahmet district of Istanbul on 6 January, police discovered a number of explosive devices planted in a range of locations across Istanbul during the weekend of 17/18 January. One device exploded but there were no casualties.</p> <p>On 10 August, 2 people opened fire outside the US Consulate-General in Istanbul. On 27 July there were reports of possible threats to public transport in Istanbul, in particular the metro stations at Yenikapi, Taksim, Osmanbey and Haciosman and stops on the Metrobus line.</p> <p>The FCO advise against all travel to within 10km of the border with Syria. The FCO advise against all but essential travel to the remaining areas of Sirnak, Mardin, Sanlurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis and Hatay provinces. On 20 July, a suicide bomber killed at least 28 people and injured over 100 others in Suruc, Sanlurfa. On 11 May 2013, 2 car bombs killed 53 people and wounded more than 100 in the town of Reyhanli, Hatay province. In October 2012, 5 Turkish citizens were killed when a shell fell on the town of Akçakale. Syrian forces continue to target areas close to the Turkish border and there remains</p>	<p>You should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate terrorist attacks. We advise you to remain vigilant in all public areas across the country and report anything suspicious to the authorities. Attend security briefings at your host university and follow local guidance.</p> <p>The main provinces affected by PKK attacks are Hakkari, Sirnak, Siirt and Tunceli. There is a high level of security activity in these provinces and you risk arrest if you fail to comply with restrictions. We advise against all but essential travel to these areas.</p>

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	<p>a heightened risk of terrorism in the region.</p> <p>There is a threat of kidnapping near the Syrian border in Turkey. Terrorist groups operating in Syria, including those like ISIL who routinely use kidnapping as a tactic, are present in the Syrian border areas and are capable of conducting kidnappings from across the border. ISIL and other terrorist groups view those engaged in humanitarian aid work or journalism as legitimate targets. If you're kidnapped, the reason for your presence is unlikely to serve as protection or secure your safe release.</p> <p>The terrorist group DHKP-C (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party Front) has launched a series of attacks in Istanbul in 2015 targeting the Turkish police and judiciary. On 5 June, two people were killed and many injured by an explosion at an HDP rally in Diyarbakir. On 9 June, 4 people were killed in an attack in Diyarbakir. You should exercise caution.</p> <p>On Monday 18 May, the local offices of the political party HDP (People's Democratic Party) in Adana and Mersin (both in southern Turkey) were attacked with explosive devices. On 5 June, two people were killed and many injured by an explosion at an HDP rally in Diyarbakir. On 9 June, four people were killed in attack in Diyarbakir. On 10 August, 2 assailants opened fire outside the US Consulate-General in Istanbul.</p> <p>Terrorist bomb attacks have also been carried out on government and civilian targets, including military targets, in major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Adana, Izmir, Mersin and tourist resorts on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts (these have included Kusadasi, Cesme, Marmaris and Antalya, Manavgat). Devices have been placed in crowded areas, restaurants, refuge bins, outside banks and hotels and on dolmus mini-buses and trains.</p>	
<p><u>Crime</u></p>	<p>Generally crime is low, but street robbery and pickpocketing are common in the major tourist areas of Istanbul.</p>	<p>You should be wary of approaches from strangers offering to change money or offering food and drink, which may be drugged, or offering to take you to a restaurant or nightclub.</p>

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	<p>Assault</p>	<p>You should maintain at least the same level of personal security awareness as in the UK. Be aware that alcohol and drugs can lead to you being less alert, less in control and less aware of your environment. If you are going to drink, know your limit. Remember that drinks served in bars overseas are often stronger than those in the UK. In all circumstances, you should buy your own drinks and keep sight of them at all times to make sure they are not spiked.</p> <p>In 2014, 14 cases of sexual assault, including rape, were reported to British consular staff in Turkey. Most of these cases occurred during the summer holiday period in coastal tourist areas. Most were committed late at night by someone the victim met during the evening.</p> <p>Never accept lifts from strangers or passing acquaintances at any time. Always try to find a registered yellow taxi and make a note of the registration number before getting in.</p>
	<p>You should take particular care when travelling by road throughout Turkey, as road conditions can be poor. Road traffic accidents are common and are mainly due to either poor or reckless driving, particularly at night.</p>	
	<p>There is a threat from kidnapping in Turkey. A British national was kidnapped by terrorists in Diyarbakir in June 2012. The same group had previously kidnapped road construction employees in May 2012, in the eastern province of Iğdır.</p>	
	<p>Demonstrations regularly take place across Turkey and can get out of hand and have the potential to turn violent. Demonstrations occur regularly in major cities. Taksim Square, Besiktas and Kadiyoy (Asian side) districts and Istiklal Street in Istanbul are gathering points for those seeking to demonstrate. Police will take measures to control crowds using various means, which may include tear gas.</p>	<p>You should avoid all demonstrations and leave the area if one develops.</p>
	<p>Turkey has strict laws against the use, possession or trafficking of illegal drugs. If you are convicted of any of</p>	<p>Do not get involved with drugs.</p>

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	these offences, you can expect to receive a heavy fine or a prison sentence of 4 to 24 years.	
<u>Health</u>	The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), relating to free medical treatment in EU countries, is not valid in Turkey.	Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.
	British nationals have been injured and in some cases killed participating in extreme sports.	If you participate in extreme sports (including paragliding, parasailing, white-water rafting and off-road driving), satisfy yourself that adequate safety precautions are in place. Only use reputable operators and insist on training before use. Make sure your travel insurance covers you for all the activities you want to undertake.
<u>Natural Disasters</u>	Many parts of Turkey lie on a major seismic fault line and are subject to earthquakes and tremors. An earthquake of magnitude 6.5 occurred on 24 May 2014 in the Sea of Marmara.	You should familiarise yourself with safety procedures in the event of an earthquake. The US Federal Emergency Management Agency has information about what to do before, during and after an earthquake: http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes

Please also note and be sensitive to the following:

- It is illegal not to carry some form of photographic ID in Turkey. It is therefore advisable to carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times.
- Dress modestly if visiting a mosque or a religious shrine.
- Smoking is prohibited on public transport and in other public areas like stadiums, playgrounds, cafes, bars, and restaurants. You can be fined if you are caught smoking in a designated smoke-free area.
- Do not take photographs near military or official installations. You should seek permission before photographing individuals.
- Homosexuality is not illegal but is not widely tolerated: public displays of affection could result in prosecution for public order offences.
- It is an offence to insult the Turkish nation or the national flag, or to deface or tear up currency.