

## MOROCCO RISK ASSESSMENT



### City & Country

MOROCCO, Various

### Prepared by

Sussex Abroad Office

### Before you go -

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 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.

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco>

### VISA REGULATIONS

Please check regulations relating to visas and passport validity on gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco/entry-requirements>

**Emergency number in Morocco:** 150

**Vaccinations:** At least 8 weeks before your trip, check the latest country-specific health advice from the [National Travel Health Network and Centre \(NaTHNaC\)](#) on the TravelHealthPro website. Each country-specific page has information on vaccine recommendations, any current health risks or outbreaks, and factsheets with information on staying healthy abroad. Guidance is also available from NHS (Scotland) on the [FitForTravel website](#).

## TERRORISM

Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in Morocco. You should be vigilant at all times.

Two foreign nationals were murdered while hiking near Mount Toubkal in December 2018. Moroccan authorities arrested 4 individuals in connection with the murders, including 1 they say had links to “an extremist group”, following the release on social media including Daesh affiliated media of a video apparently showing 1 of the murders.

The Moroccan authorities have warned of an increased threat linked to the number of Moroccans sympathetic or belonging to Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL) and other extremist groups, and regularly report the disruption of terrorist cells across the country, some of which have intended to carry out attacks in Morocco against government installations, public spaces and tourist sites.

Attacks could be indiscriminate or target foreigners. In April 2011, 17 people were killed and 25 injured in a large explosion caused by a bomb in Marrakech at the Argana Restaurant in Djema el-Fna Square.

Protective security measures, including security personnel, may be visible in certain areas including hotels and sites popular with tourists.

There's considered to be a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

**Kidnap:** There is a threat of kidnapping by groups operating in North Africa, particularly from Libya, Mauritania and groups originating in the Sahel. This includes Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQ-IM) and Daesh-affiliated groups, who may travel across the region's porous border. There is a heightened risk of kidnap in border and remote desert areas of North Africa. Terrorist groups have kidnapped foreigners, government officials and civilians in the region for financial gain and for political leverage. Further kidnaps are likely.

Those engaged in tourism, humanitarian aid work, journalism or business sectors are viewed as legitimate targets. If you're kidnapped, the reason for your presence is unlikely to serve as a protection or secure your safe release.

The long-standing policy of the British government is not to make substantive concessions to hostage takers. The British government considers that paying ransoms and releasing prisoners increases the risk of further hostage taking. The Terrorism Act (2000) also makes payments to terrorists illegal.

There's a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. Find out more about the [global threat from terrorism](#), how to minimise your risk and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack.

Type	Nature of the Hazard	Procedures to Minimise Risk
<b>POLITICAL SITUATION</b>	<p>Demonstrations and protests can occur at short notice across the country. In general, demonstrations are peaceful but there have been isolated incidents of violence.</p> <p>A series of demonstrations have taken place since October 2016 in northern Morocco, mainly around the town of Al Hoceima. There have also been a number of smaller scale protests in other cities. More demonstrations are planned, and will generally be heavily policed.</p>	<p>You should follow local and international developments in the media and take sensible security precautions. Avoid political gatherings and demonstrations.</p> <p>Always observe instructions given by the local security authorities.</p>
<b>CRIME</b>	<p>There have been recent incidents involving the use of knives against tourists in street attacks, thefts and burglaries in the major cities and along beaches</p>	<p>You should avoid quiet areas and be vigilant at all times, particularly after dark. Don't carry large amounts of money or valuables around with you.</p>

	<p>When driving, avoid isolated roads and use toll roads ('cuotas') whenever possible. Keep car doors locked and windows closed, especially at traffic lights. There have been a number of violent car-jackings and robberies along the Pacific Highway and you should be careful when travelling on this route. Those travelling in large camper vans or sports utility vehicles (SUVs) have been targeted in the past.</p>	<p>If you suspect you're being followed or watched, drive to a police station or other safe place.</p>
	<p>Petty crime is common, especially in tourist areas like the medina quarter of towns/cities and on beaches. Crimes include pick-pocketing, bag snatching and drive-by motorcycle theft of visible jewellery and handbags.</p>	<p>Be vigilant when asking for directions and using ATMs as crime and aggressive begging can occur. Credit card fraud and scams like substituting inferior goods for those that were actually bought are common. You should remain vigilant and alert to potential confidence tricks.</p>
	<p>When visiting the medina quarter of a town or city, make sure any guide you use is operating with the agreement of the local tourist authorities, and displays an official badge. Harassment of tourists by people posing as official tourist guides is common.</p>	<p>Women should exercise caution particularly when travelling alone as they could be vulnerable to unwanted attention or harassment.</p>

<p><b>LOCAL LAWS</b></p>	<p>Morocco is a Muslim country which follows Islamic laws and customs.</p>	<p>Be aware of your actions to ensure they don't offend, especially during the holy month of Ramadan or if you intend to visit religious areas. You should respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times. See <a href="#">Travelling during Ramadan</a>.</p> <p>Avoid public displays of affection, particularly outside the main tourist areas and near religious places.</p>
	<p>Sexual relations outside marriage are punishable by law. It's not uncommon for hotels to ask couples to show evidence of marriage at the time of check-in, and if such evidence is not available, to insist on separate rooms.</p>	<p>Respect the warnings and don't walk too close to the water. Tourists have been seriously injured in crocodile attacks in the past.</p>
	<p>Homosexuality is a criminal offence in Morocco</p>	<p>Be sensitive to local laws and customs and avoid public displays of affection. Complaints can lead to prosecution. See <a href="#">information and advice page</a> for the LGBT community before you travel.</p>
	<p>Women, especially when travelling alone, may receive unwanted attention.</p>	<p>To minimise hassle, you may choose to wear clothes which cover the arms, legs and chest.</p>

	Alcohol is served in licensed hotels, bars and in tourist areas. However, drinking alcohol in the street and anywhere other than a licensed restaurant or bar isn't allowed and can lead to arrest.	
	It is against the law to carry bibles in Arabic, to attempt to distribute any non-Muslim or evangelical literature, or to be involved in any such activity.	
	Avoid taking any photographs near sensitive political or military sites.	
	It's illegal to possess pornographic material.	
<b>DRUGS</b>	Possession, use or trafficking in illegal drugs is a serious offence and can result in a lengthy prison sentence and a heavy fine.	Do not become involved in drugs of any kind.
	Cases of <a href="#">Chikungunya virus</a> have been confirmed in Mexico. For more details	You should take steps to <a href="#">avoid being bitten by mosquitoes</a> .

	about this outbreak, see the website of the <a href="#">National Health Network and Centre</a> .	
<b>DRUGS</b>	Penalties for drug offences are severe. Convictions carry sentences of up to 25 years.	Don't become involved with drugs of any kind.
<b>NATURAL DISASTERS</b>	Morocco is in an earthquake zone. Minor earthquakes occur occasionally. A strong earthquake hit northern Morocco around the port town of Al Hoceima in 2004, killing more than 600 people.	Familiarise yourself with general safety procedures in the event of an earthquake and take note of any instructions in hotel rooms.
	Heavy rain can cause flash flooding in some areas, particularly in the mountains or near rivers during winter months. Walking and driving can be dangerous in flooded areas.	If flooding does occur in your area, listen to local media and follow the instructions of the local authorities.
<b>HIKING</b>	If you're planning to hike on Mount Toubkal or on other mountains in	

	Morocco, seek local advice and take necessary precautions, including safe camp arrangements. Trekking or camping alone can be dangerous, consider joining a group or hiring a registered guide. Crime is also a risk: 2 foreign nationals were murdered while hiking near Mount Toubkal in December 2018.	
--	---	--

**Please also note and be sensitive to the following:**

- The Mexican Police have the authority to ask for proof of legal status in Mexico and, on occasion, have detained British nationals without documents. You should carry photocopies of the relevant pages of your passport and of the stamped 'Forma Migratoria Múltiple' (FMM) given to you on arrival in Mexico at all times. If you're a resident you may be asked to provide your residency card issued by the Mexican government.
- If you're travelling between states or near international borders, you may be stopped by Mexican immigration authorities for immigration checks. You'll need to be able to provide your passport and FMM slip. Copies are not accepted. If you're unable to produce these documents, you may be detained, held at an immigration holding centre, and ultimately deported.
- Homosexuality: civil unions between same sex partners are legal in Mexico City and Coahuila, but homosexuality is tolerated, rather than accepted. Public displays of affection between same sex couples may be frowned upon.