

Student's Name

Instructor's Name

Course and Code

Date

A Report on the Travel Warning Issued on the Democratic Republic of Congo by the US  
Department of State

Traveling is fantastic, especially when it involves visiting a country one has never been before. However, traveling can be sometimes deemed unsafe; thus, travel warnings and alerts are necessary. Travel warnings and alerts are usually issued for a particular period. Some are generally for a very short time such as weeks while others are longer. Travel warnings are issued whenever a country is considered unsafe for citizens to visit or tour abroad for particular or obvious reasons (Cook 56). Some of the common reasons are civil wars resulted by unstable government leadership, widespread epidemics and disease outbreaks, crime, and violence. Such a travel warning has recently been issued by the US Department against my homeland, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Being the ambassador of Congo in the US, I strongly oppose the actions taken by the US Department of tourism in my country. In order to guard Congo's rapport and our tourists' interests, this paper will explain the current situation in my homeland and the efforts made by the government to enhance security. Moreover, the information in the essay will purposively determine whether the travel warnings to Congo are eligible.

Two weeks ago, the Department of the US issued a travel warning against Congo. The warning has since paralyzed traveling of people in the country for fear of their safety. Moreover, most of the tourism businesses are deteriorating due to the lack of consumers who are mostly foreign guests. Most of the tourists who were in the country had to rush out to theirs after the

warning was issued. As the ambassador of Congo in the US, I had to take my time and analyze both the situation in Congo and the claims from the US. Therefore, I am writing this report to remove any misleading information concerning Congo.

Congo has been said not to be safe for both its citizens and those visiting as tourists. The claims have been associated with the health issues, wars, possible wrangles during the forthcoming elections, and the suspicions of the disease outbreak. My stand is that the Department of State should lift the travel warning since Congo is moderately safe. The country is the second largest state in Africa, and it has frequently been facing the problem of war, violence, and conflict over decades. However, the government of Congo has ensured high-security measures, and disputes have currently been controlled. Some of the strategies the government has taken are aimed at controlling the challenges it has been facing such as investing in security equipment. Additionally, the government has improved infrastructure to facilitate proper communication and transportation (Clark and Decalo 101). Therefore, the country should be judged by its present progress rather than by its past situation. Statistics on the crime rate have recently decreased, and that is an indicator Congo is on the right track.

On the other hand, several projects have been undertaken to improve the country's conditions and safeguard tourism for it is a high-income earner to the country. Despite war and insecurity incidences occasionally experienced that have caused a threat to tourism activities, the response of the government is to combat the issue. According to last years' report of the World Tourism Journal, Congo is reviving its tourism industry with security and infrastructure development faster than any other country in Africa (Mukenge 54). Therefore, the US Department should not use infrastructure and economic instability as a reason to issue the travel warning.

Additionally, my new position as the ambassador comes in days before the national elections that take place every five years. It is obvious that such elections might result in war due to conflicting political ideologies. Due to this reason, our government has discussed and presented effective interventions to mitigate the occurrence of post-election violence that we are confident will not occur. The national elections should not be considered a reason for this travel warning as we have everything under control.

### **Congo's Government**

It is no secret that Congo's leadership has been unstable for a while. However, the issue has been controlled through the enhancement of better governance. The change had been progressive since attaining independence in the year 1960 when the country became democratic. Later, Mobutu came to power adhering to a totalitarian regime. However, when Kabila came to power by overthrowing Mobutu, he formed a democracy through the forces from neighboring Rwanda and Uganda (Turner 165). This factor has made the country be associated with immense wrangles caused by political influence. Consequently, the government of the US has issued travel warnings over the political instability in Congo severally. However, with the current leadership in the country, this issue has been curbed due to the existing political stability. Nowadays, the government has ensured that their influence on the running of the country is positive and facilitates stability and conducive environment for growth. Therefore, the country when compared to past years has been experiencing continued stability as it enjoys continued economic growth and development. Thus, the US government should not base their traveling warning against political instability for it does not exist any longer.

### **Violence and War Conflict Mitigation**

The country has faced violence and civil war characterized by armed groups, elements of the Congolese armed forces and militia over the years. These agencies are situated in the North and South Kivu. The new provinces of Bas-Uele, Tanganyika, Haut Uele, Haut-Lomami, and the eastern Maniema Province have been known to loot, rape, abduct, kill, and carry out paramilitary or military tasks in which residents are arbitrarily targeted. Kidnapping for money has also been common, particularly in the west and north of Goma. Additionally, poorly trained security forces frequently question and detain travelers at various unofficial and official border or roadblocks crossings throughout the nation, especially near government's installations and buildings in the capital, Kinshasa. Demands for bribes have been shared in the past (Clark and Decalo 29). These factors have mostly threatened the safety measures of the local and foreign populace in the country in recent years.

However, the government in an aim of reconstructing the country's economic development has come up with beneficial conflict solving processes. These processes diagnose and treat well the conflicts contributing to development. The government has also resolved not to ignore situations that could be possible reasons for conflict and violence arising. It has also determined to perceive conflicts as problems to be solved and ways for development and not blame apportioning opportunities. It should be noticed that the government is acting remarkably well.

### **Crime Prevention**

Most of the reported crimes against tourists in the country include pick-pocketing and petty theft. In the streets, the vast population of people associated with theft comprises the homeless and street kids. These individuals have been said to operate alone while some in gangs (*Congo Democratic Republic: Foreign Policy and Government Guide* 243). Recently, intense

incidences such as assaults and armed robbery have been reported to occur among the population of the Americans. The tourists targeted are usually those alone in places such as supermarkets, hotels, and nightclubs. The American government has provided 24-hour surveillance for all the public residential to ensure security and reduce vulnerability to theft and stealing. Measures to reduce cases of crime have been taken by both the government and all the cooperation associated with tourism activities.

Specifically, the government has implemented security approaches targeting the various environmental and social factors that result in increased crime rates. Urban planning initiatives aim at reducing opportunities for crime to occur. They are focused on the possible causes of the offence such as congestion and unemployment and finding solutions to such problems. This approach has been in action in Bas-Uele, Haut Uele, Tanganyika, Haut-Lomami, and the eastern Maniema Province, which are the places reported being crime etched. This factor ultimately comes as a security measure for both local and foreign tourists. Moreover, the increased employment opportunities that have been created for the youths have led to decrease of the homeless and street children. Consequently, the crime issues have dropped, and the urban residents' safety has been increased (*Republic of Congo: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 5*). Therefore, the tourist in the country has no reason to feel unsafe, and the governments should encourage them to visit Congo and enjoy the rich phenomena of our lovely country.

### **Disease and Epidemics Eradication**

Additionally, the US government has quoted health challenge as a reason for the travel warning. According to our research and assessment of the current situation in Congo, many infectious diseases are rampant in the region, and outbreaks of potentially deadly infectious diseases can occur with no warning. However, Congo is not the only area prone to this effect.

Tourists are usually advised to consult their healthcare providers before traveling any state in the world. Specifically, the government of the DRC has advised all the visitors to seek medical vaccinations and malaria prophylaxis (Berger 48). The reason behind this measure is that in DRC, malaria is a major health problem. In the past, nearly 40% of all outpatient visits have been accounted that is the leading cause of child mortality. This factor should not be misunderstood as a challenge but as a precaution from the government of DRC showing concern for the welfare of the tourists.

Moreover, the eradication of diseases and epidemics comes as an extraordinary goal by the government. The government has highly invested in offering immunity and vaccination to visiting tourists as well as to its population. Notably, a great change in the death rate has reduced, and improved medical facilities in the country have increased the security of all inhabitants of the country. Moreover, advocating for the systematic application of hygiene, environmental modification as well eliminating breeding sites for the disease-causing vectors has contributed to reduced disease spreads in the country. Thus, the claims of the US government against Congo on disease spreads are biased.

Therefore, Congo is reasonably safe for its population and any tourist willing to travel to the country. As a government representative, I am confident that the country is safe, and all visitors are welcome to the country. Therefore, everyone should adhere to the travel requirements and feel free to visit Congo. Moreover, I urge the government of the US to lift the travel warning for it is not necessary.

Conclusively, the current situation that has provoked the travel warning should be noted not to be permanent but rather temporary. It is due to change after the election fever has cooled down and the political background reverted to normal with the incorporation of the new

government. The outgoing and preceding governments have also been working hard to ensure the reasons and complications associated with the issuance of such travel warnings are resolved. The efforts put in this journey should have been considered even before the travel warning was issued. Both sides should have been weighed, and one would have in doubtfully agreed that the travel warning would have been inappropriate and imbalanced on my country's side. The DRC is safe for any US citizen who wishes to tour and take the addressed precautions. Thank you in advance!