



2014 Winter Games in Sochi

Travel Risk Report

TRAVEL RISK REPORT

XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi

Created on 21 January 2014

Risk Rating



Moderate Risk

INSTABILITY	L	Low
TERRORISM	M	Moderate
CRIMINAL	M	Moderate
HEALTH	L	Low
TRANSPORT	L	Low

Emergency Numbers

Police 03

OVERVIEW

The XXII Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games are scheduled to take place from 6 February to 16 March 2014 in the Black Sea city of Sochi. The Games present security, transportation and logistical challenges unprecedented among past host countries. On 10 January 2014, the US State Department warned that the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi are an attractive target for Islamist terrorists based nearby in Russia's North Caucasus region. The international sports event will also provide a target-rich environment for criminals who prey on tourists. With a potential audience of three billion, the sports event will also offer a platform for single-issue activist groups to broadcast their message to the world.

Sochi Security Operation

The Kremlin has launched one of the biggest security operations in Russia since the Second World War. A security zone has been created around Sochi that stretches about 100km (60 miles) along the Black Sea coast and up to 40km (25 miles) inland. The city itself has been split into two security zones to protect venues and visitors. A "controlled zone" near Games venues will limit access to people with tickets and proof of identity, while another "forbidden zone" will cover areas around Sochi that are only accessible to those with the highest level of security clearance. Surveillance for the Games will include 5,000 CCTV cameras, drones and underwater sonar systems.

More than 40,000 police and military personnel will be deployed to protect Olympic facilities, bridges, railway networks, schools, hospitals, hotels and restaurants. Air and naval assets are available to help combat any possible attack on the Sochi Winter Olympics. A 10,000-member Spetsnaz group called "Operations Group Sochi" will secure Sochi's external perimeter and the mountainous border regions of Abkhazia and Kabardino-Balkaria. The Spetsnaz unit, the "Alpha" group, has already been deployed in Sochi for six months to conduct counter-terrorism operations and intelligence-gathering activities around Olympic Villages and sports facilities. Controlled by the Federal Security Service (FSB), Alpha is trained for armed response and hostage rescue.

In addition, anyone purchasing a ticket to events will have to provide passport details that will allow the FSB to screen visitors and check identities upon arrival. The FSB plans to monitor all telephone and Internet traffic during the event. The System of Operative-Investigative Measures (SORM) is able to track the use of sensitive words or phrases mentioned in emails, telephone calls and on social media. All vehicles have been banned from the area beginning from 7 January through 21 March except for those registered in Sochi or with special Olympic security clearance.

The projected cost of the security operation is estimated to be over GBP2bn (USD3.3bn). In comparison, the cost of security for the 2012 London Olympics was estimated at GBP553mn (USD912mn) with some 13,500 military personnel deployed to protect venues. The level of security in the British capital was considered unprecedented at the time but, as these projections suggest, the Sochi spend is predicted to significantly exceed it.

Terrorism

Russian security and intelligence concerns about terrorism during the Winter Olympics are well-founded. In July 2013, Doku Umarov, the leader of the al-Qaeda-linked Caucasus Emirate, vowed that his fighters would use “any means” to stop the Games from taking place. Three suicide bombings between 21 October 2013 and 30 December 2013 in the southern city of Volgograd, some 645km (400 miles) to the southwest of Sochi, have been a somber reminder of the terrorist threat. Islamist militants belonging to Ansar al-Sunnah published a video on 20 January 2014 claiming they were behind the bombings and warned of further attacks to coincide with the Games. In the video, the militants declared their support for Islamist fighters in Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria.

Security planners for the Olympics have also been pre-occupied with the possibility of terror threats from nationalist groups who wish to make their grievances known to a global audience. Circassians are unhappy that the Games will be held on land that belonged to them before the Imperial Russian Army drove them out in 1864. The Olympics coincide with the 150th anniversary of the defeat of the Circassians and their forced deportation. Skiing and snowboarding will be held in Krasnaya Polynana, or “Red Hill”, a symbolic site for Circassians. In addition, Olympic organisers have scheduled the closing ceremony of Sochi on the anniversary of Stalin’s deportation of Chechen and Ingush populations of the North Caucasus to Central Asia. While there have been no threats of violence, such grievances have driven much of the insecurity and instability on Russia’s southern periphery.

The extremely tight security for the Games is likely to have a deterrence effect in Sochi itself. The attacks in Volgograd on 21 October, 29 and 30 December 2013, may illustrate the challenges for terrorists to penetrate the security force defences in Sochi itself. Russian intelligence believes Islamist terrorists are targeting cities like Volgograd in order to sow fear and deter visitors from travelling to Sochi for the Olympics. Indeed, a greater threat is likely to be posed to softer targets such as transport networks elsewhere in the country or associated events organised away from the main security zones. Potential targets include bus terminals in Adler and Krasnodar and high-speed rail links connecting Moscow to Sochi. Suicide bombers previously struck the Moscow subway system in 2010 and the city’s Domodedovo Airport in 2011.

Unrest

The Games are also likely to be an attractive target for numerous activist groups protesting against elements of Russian domestic and international policies. Gay rights campaigners have urged a boycott of the international sports event after Russia passed a law punishing people for homosexual “propaganda” in June 2013. Russian citizens found guilty of violating the law could face a fine of up to RUB100,000 (GBP1,800; EUR2,170; USD3,100). Foreign citizens face similar fines, up to 14 days in jail, and deportation. The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community has called the bill homophobic.

Environmentalists claim large-scale construction projects have led to the destruction of Sochi’s natural habitat. Groups like Ecological Watch of the North Caucasus have staged rallies to raise awareness of environmental law violations. Other conservation groups have staged numerous protests over Russia’s offshore oil production at the Prirazlomnoye field in the Arctic. Greenpeace in particular has used direct action campaigns to raise awareness of the issue in Russia. In September 2013, five UK Greenpeace activists were held in Russia for 100 days after trying to board the

Prirazlomnoye rig to prevent it from drilling.

The government has designated an area in which demonstrators will be able to legally hold protests during the Sochi Winter Olympics. Activists will have the right to rally in a park in the coastal city of Khosta, some 12km (7.5 miles) south of Sochi. However, all rallies will need to be approved by local authorities. The Chinese government imposed similar restrictions on protests for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Crime

While crime in Sochi is not a pervasive threat, it remains one of the most likely sources of harm to travelers. Major events such as the Olympic Games are an attractive opportunity for criminals to target visitors, although a heavy police presence may act as a deterrent. The London Metropolitan Police reported that crime fell by 5 per cent during the 2012 London Olympics compared with the same in 2011. The majority of those arrested near Games' venues were for ticket touting, while others were taken into custody for fraud, theft, assault and public order offences.

The Sochi Olympics may follow a similar trend. Petty crimes involving pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and other forms of street theft are likely to be the most prominent criminal activities. High-risk areas include crowded tourist areas, markets and transport terminals. Though unlikely to take place at Games' venues due to tight security, robberies can be conducted using a knife and other bladed weapons.

Scammers have been known to target foreign visitors in Russia. The "turkey drop" involves the discovery of a large wad of cash on the ground. When the victim picks up the money, he is accused of stealing by the perpetrator. Another criminal dressed as a police officer might then approach the traveler and accuse him of stealing and solicit a bribe.

Fraud associated with credit card use and use of ATM machines is on the rise in Russia. Information security is also a significant concern in Russia. Theft of information, hacking and electronic eavesdropping are significant problems due to complexities in the regulatory environment and the relative prevalence of capable criminal operators.

Transportation

Air

There are safety concerns over regional and internal flights in Russia, and several fatal crashes or emergency landings have occurred in recent years. These have been generally attributed to the poor quality and standards of the aircrafts used, weak government implementation of safety regulations, poor pilot training, and cost-cutting schemes by various operators.

The airport nearest the Winter Games is Sochi International Airport (AER), which is located in Adler district. AER has undergone major renovation since 2006 to meet the high numbers of passengers travelling to Sochi. A VIP terminal and a temporary Games Terminal have been constructed to increase passenger capacity and minimize check-in and luggage retrieval times. In addition, AER will be divided into three sectors to optimize passenger traffic during peak times. Sector A will serve Aeroflot and S7 airlines while sectors B and C will be assigned to other domestic carriers and international airlines respectively.

Non-stop international flights to Sochi depart from Austria, Germany, Turkey, Moldova, Tajikistan, Belarus, Armenia and Uzbekistan. The majority of flights to Sochi are via

numerous domestic airlines, including Avianova, S7 Airlines, Sky Express, Vladivostok Avia and Yakutia Airlines. There are five alternative airports ranging in the distance between 140 and 300 miles from Sochi, including Krasnodar (KRR), Gelendzhik (GDZ), Anapa (AAQ), Stavropol (STW) and Rostov (ROV).

Land

For getting to and from AER, travelers are advised to pre-arrange transportation through a hotel concierge or other reputable private service providers whenever possible. Coordinated journey management is recommended. Some taxi drivers try to overcharge for services relying on a visitor's ignorance of local pricing. The journey from AER into central Sochi is about RUB1200 (GBP21; EUR26; USD46).

Rental cars are available for hire from Europcar, Sixt, Hertz and Avis although self-drive is generally not recommended for those unfamiliar with local driving conditions due to the high accident rate, traffic jams during rush hour and a lack of parking spaces. A high-speed railway, the Aeroexpress, connects AER with Sochi. The trip takes around 45 minutes and costs RUB200 (GBP3.60; EUR4.30 USD5.90). For schedule and fares visit www.aeroexpress.ru/en/regions/sochi.html.

Getting Around

The two main means of public transport in Sochi are buses and trains. Sochi has two rail terminals in Central Sochi and Adler. Long-distance and commuter trains are one way to travel between Sochi's districts. Check the Russian Railways website (www.rzd.ru) for information.

Olympic ticket holders can travel on special rail and bus routes, as well as a system of cable cars, free of charge around Sochi. Spectator transport points are located in the Coastal and Mountain Clusters: Sochi, Matsesta, Khosta, Kudépsta (bus stop), Adler, AER and Olympic Park, as well as in Esto-Sadok, Krasnaya Polyana, and Rosa Khutor. Bus fare is RUB16 (GBP0.26; EUR0.34; USD0.47) around Sochi and RUB50 (GBP0.90; EUR1.09; USD1.48) to go between the districts. The public bus routes are:

- 105 Sochi-Krasnaya Polyana, via AER
- 125 Sochi-Olympic Park
- 135 Adler-Rosa Khutor
- 173 Airport-Olympic Park
- 174 Adler Train Station-Olympic Park
- 186 Sochi Train Station-Rosa Khutor

Health and Medical

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations will vary depending on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the duration of visit and the areas to be visited. The most commonly recommended non-routine vaccinations for those visiting Russia are for hepatitis A and B, typhoid, and rabies and tick-borne encephalitis for travelers in rural or forested regions. The ultimate decision on which vaccines, prophylaxis and medicines should be taken prior to and during stay in Russia should be made after consulting with a qualified healthcare professional.

Medical

Medical services will be provided by a team of more than 2,000 qualified medical specialists. Seven hospitals as well as mobile medical units and medical stations will be supported by the Municipal Ambulance Services of Sochi (EMS). EMERCOM Rescue Helicopters (HEMS) will be used as one of the evacuation methods for the Mountain Cluster.

Spectators will be treated at the Spectator Medical Stations at all competition venues, in the Olympic Park, and at the Olympic Stadium. Medical services for spectators include mobile response teams in the spectator stands or common accessible areas, first aid stations and Spectator Medical Stations, starting from one hour prior to an official event, and ending once the gates are closed. Public health surveillance will include infectious and communicable diseases monitoring, regular sanitary inspections and testing for food, water and air quality control.

To access the emergency services outside the Games venues dial 03 from a landline phone or 112 from a mobile phone.

Patients will be accepted by:

City Hospital No. 2
Address: 43/2 Vinogradnaya St, Sochi
Telephone: +7 8622 535125, +7 8622 535476

City Hospital No. 4
Address: 42 Dagomysskaya St, Sochi
Telephone: +7 8622 614230, +7 8622 615130

City Hospital No. 6
Address: 50 Kirov St, Sochi
Telephone: +7 8622 400673, +7 8622 400529

City Hospital No. 8
Address: 24 Turichinskiy St. Krasnaya Polyana, Sochi
Telephone: +7 8622 437365

It is important to note that Russian and foreign spectators must have a medical insurance policy on their person in order to receive medical assistance. For foreign spectators having insurance, medical services have to be paid in Russia with further reimbursement by insurance company.

Travel Risk Mitigation

Accommodation safety and security:

- Accommodations with “safe rooms” are preferable to those without.
- Valuables should be locked and outside in the hotel room or stored centrally with authorities at the hotel. This may also relate to sensitive documentation, personal or commercial.
- Travelers should become familiar with all points of exit and entry, especially in relation to their hotel room.
- It is advisable to not stay in rooms on the same side as the front of the hotel or facing a parking lot. This is due to the potential damage caused from terrorist bomb attacks.

Terrorism

With respect to the threats posed by terrorism, travelers can take the following recommendations to mitigation/manage the impact that such a threat poses to safety.

- Stay well-informed of the security environment and the threats, both current and future.
- Establish and understand communication protocols with crisis management team.
- Establish evacuation protocols.
- Travellers should be vigilant, take notice of your surroundings, and report any suspicious object, package, person or activity to local authorities immediately.
- Note any individuals seemingly loitering outside restricted and controlled security zones as well as any vehicles that seem to be suspicious and any other unusual incidents.
- Time spent in hotel lobbies and in the vicinity of security installations and in transport hubs where attacks may take place should be limited as much as possible.

Civil Unrest

- Stay well-informed. Keep up-to-date with local news through monitoring of media or asking the local community, either hotel staff or with your local fixer.
- Know the locations of your embassy and ports of departure.
- Have all travel and professional documents with the proper stamps and signatures. Make copies of travel documents and make sure that they are in safe and secure location.
- Allow for extra time if travel is necessary through known protest sites and plan alternate routes.
- Travelers should be aware that the Russian authorities tightly control demonstrations, and security forces have been known to adopt aggressive tactics to break up unauthorized rallies.

Crime

- Stay-well informed. Keep up-to-date with local news through monitoring of media or asking the local community, either hotel staff or with your local fixer to avoid any high crime areas.
- If one becomes a victim of crime, report the incident to your host, hotel management, crisis management team and diplomatic mission as soon as possible.
- In the event that valuables are stolen (e.g. wallet and mobile phones), cancel credit/bank cards, have mobile phone barred and contact airlines to obtain a replacement ticket.
- In the event that a passport is stolen, make sure you have all the relevant information needed in order to obtain a replacement.
- Personnel are advised to exercise caution around ATMs, report any suspicious activities or persons nearby, and notify bank officials if there are any unfamiliar objects affixed to the machine or if it looks as if it has been tampered with.
- If confronted by criminals, it is advisable to comply with their directives without resistance within reason.
- Travelers should avoid carrying large amounts of money or displaying other valuables as a precautionary measure.

- If using credit/debit cards, it is important to monitor accounts frequently and never provide any personal details, including one's address and banking information, among others, to anyone who is unfamiliar to them over the phone or the Internet.

Information Security

- Travelers should consider travelling with "clean" devices. These devices should have all personal identity information and sensitive files removed or sanitized.
- Devices with wireless connection capabilities, including tablets, laptops and smartphones, should have the Wi-Fi disabled at all times.
- Internet services at cafes, coffee shops, hotels, airports, or other local venues, should not be considered safe for sensitive communications or web browsing.
- Change all passwords before and after your trip.
- Consider purchasing a phone during travel that uses a local SIM card.
- Do not check business or personal electronic device with your luggage at the airport.

If you are a Europ Assistance customer in need of assistance while attending the Olympic Games, please refer to your program documents to contact us 24/7 or email us at ops@europassistance-usa.com. If you are experiencing an emergency, please contact the local authorities first, and then contact us.