

26 Jan 06

Dear friends and volunteers,

In some ways this is a standard email that most organizations send out about staying informed and possible dangers. In other ways it is not. There is always the potential that it might get bad in Uganda and you need to think seriously about any feelings or concerns that you have about coming to volunteer. Get trip insurance in case you have to cancel out. Right now it is very quiet.

All the groups we know such as the Mennonite Central Committee are still having people come out to work.

Safety in Uganda:

According to what is read in the news, life in sub-Saharan Africa is to be anxious about diseases and rebel activity. Although these are of concern and need to be addressed the major fact! or in causing morbidity and mortality in Africa is travel. The statistics are mind boggling and all other problems pale in comparison. The death rate for travel on the roads in Uganda is 612 deaths/10,000 registered vehicles/year. This would translate to approximately 30,000 annual deaths in a US city of 500,000-750,000 inhabitants. In Uganda the roads are frequently in bad repair, the vehicles are overloaded, poorly maintained, mechanically unsound, traveling at excessive rates of speed and driven by poorly trained drivers.

Consequently care should be taken whenever one attempts to travel in Uganda. Travel in a bus or a private car cannot be taken lightly. We urge you to proceed with caution when traveling in Uganda or in sub-Saharan Africa.

We ask each of you to stay informed about the current political situation in Uganda through the State Dept web site. It is a good idea to have travel insurance in case you need to ! cancel out on your trip due to a change in the political situation. There are elections at the end of February for President. President Museveni has changed the constitution so that he can serve for a third term and some think Museveni wants to be President for life. This will be the first multi party election. Scott is in Kampala now and says everything is very quiet and peaceful.

We live in southwestern Uganda in a remote area along the border of the Congo/DRC/Zaire. It is a 10 hour difficult ride to Kampala. The DRC is not stable along this border but up to this time we have never felt unsafe. There is a large military presence where we live which guards the Bwindi Park. We have been out of the country for 5 months so are not up on the latest but Scott will send me a first hand report soon. Evidently Scott has read in the paper that refugees are coming across the Congo border right now so something must be going on over there. You can read up on the conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo on line.

If you have any questions please let me know.

Blessings

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