

July 2009

Special points of interest:

- Are you registered with the US Embassy
- What can the consular section do for you?
- Health notes
- Security notes

Letter from the Consul

Hello. In this first issue of the Antananarivo ACS newsletter, I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself to those of you I do not know or who do not know me well.

I arrived in Antananarivo in September as the new consular officer. Antananarivo is my second posting with the State Department—I previously worked in

Dhaka, Bangladesh. In Dhaka I also did consular work, though the section was much bigger and much busier. There we did upwards of 50,000 visa interviews a year—compared to the 1,500 I do in Antananarivo.

Before joining the Foreign Service I worked at a university and non-profit in New York City. I

have lived all over the world including Israel, Hungary and the Philippines.

I have met many of you who live in the Antananarivo area but look forward to meeting more of you as I travel around the country—both professionally and personally.

Melanie.

Consular Section Hours

Non-immigrant visa interviews:
Monday & Wednesday
7:45—10:45am

Non-immigrant visa pass back
Tuesday & Thursday
4pm

Immigrant visa interviews:
Thursday
9am

American citizen services
Monday—Friday
7:45—11:30am
Afternoons by appointment



The mission of the Bureau of Consular Affairs is to protect the lives and interests of American citizens overseas and to strengthen U.S. border security.

Are you registered with us?

In order to receive newsletters like this, warden messages, voting information, etc. you must be registered with the US Embassy. We encourage all Americans living in and visiting Madagascar to register with us—even if it's only for one day.

To register please visit <https://travelregistration.state.gov>

By registering electronically, you can keep your phone

numbers, e-mail, etc up to date. We ask that you provide us with your full contact information and to fill out the privacy act information fully.

If you are not receiving our e-mails or texts but have registered with us, please contact us at antanwarden@state.gov so we can ensure your information is up to date. Please keep in mind that this is Madagascar and sometimes technology doesn't work so well. We have had

instances of people being correctly registered but still not receiving information. We are trying our best to remedy the situation, but sometimes it is out of our hands. We ask for your patience and understanding in these matters.

Please remember to notify us when you leave the country so we can remove you from our lists.

Living in Madagascar?

This column will be in every issue to highlight services the US Embassy can provide to Americans living in Madagascar. This issue's topic is police certificates.

As many of you are aware, in order to receive a "long sejours" you must provide many documents. One of the required documents is a police certificate

from America. In order to satisfy this requirement, you have two options. First, you can have your fingerprints

Police certificates continued...

taken here at the Embassy. You then send the fingerprint card and some money to the FBI (we will provide all the information) and subsequently receive your official police record.

The second way is

less official, but also less time-consuming. The US Embassy can provide you with a letter on our letter-head stating we do not provide police certificates. We have found that the Ministry accepts this paper in lieu of an official police certificate.

If you would like either of these documents, you may come any morning between 8—12 or in the afternoon by appointment.

There is no cost for this service.

The consular section will be closed for routine American citizens services work July 20—30.

We ask that you please take care of routine services before or after the above time frame.

We will remain available for emergency services.

Security Guidelines from the RSO

Antananarivo is currently rated a critical crime threat post. The most common street crimes reported by Americans in Madagascar are pick pocketing, purse snatching and hotel room theft. But be aware that violent crime does occur, especially after nightfall even in the "good" areas of town. Also, Tana has seen crime dramatic increase in crime over the last two years.

Here are a few helpful countermeasures to avoid being a victim of a crime:

Pick-pocketing, theft and purse snatching

- Be alert when walking in a crowd.
- Keep an eye on those around you.
- Be aware of groups as pick-pockets often use accomplices to distract their victims by begging, selling something, asking questions or conversation.
- Keep valuables close to you.
- Avoid taking a purse or obvious valuables to the market.
- Keep your wallet

in your front pocket with a rubber band around it.

- If carrying a bag, ensure that it has a hearty zipper or closing mechanism.
- Take only as much cash with you as you need.
- Distribute cash it to multiple locations (wallet, pocket, etc).

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Useful Websites

[Madagascar Country Specific Information](#)

[Comoros Country Specific Information](#)

[General Information About Travel Abroad](#)

www.antananarivo.usembassy.gov

Update on the H1N1 Pandemic

We are now in the throws of the transmission. Influenza is thought to spread first declared influenza pandemic in 41 years. Declaring H1N1 a "pandemic" only means that it is, or soon will be, present everywhere in the world.

So far there have been no cases identified in Madagascar: the Institut Pasteur performs meticulous surveillance. Our location on an island, with a momentary lull in tourism has delayed its appearance, but it is inevitable that it will come, and soon.

What should you do? For now, get ready by developing good habits to limit

mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. If you get sick, stay home.

When the pandemic finally makes it to Madagascar, you will already be in the habit of doing the right things to minimize its impact on you and your family.

*Dr. Jean Rinaldo MD MPH
Regional Medical Officer (Rover)
Embassy Antananarivo Health Unit*