

Associated Colleges of the South International Programs

Policy Regarding U.S. Department of State Public Announcements and Travel Warnings and Study Abroad Programs

ACS is committed to developing a wide variety of international study, research and work opportunities for students; however, we recognize that there are situations in which personal security issues may outweigh the advantages of exposure to international experiences. Evaluation of such potential situations includes monitoring the United States Department of State's public announcements and travel warnings. (See page 2 for an explanation of the Department's reporting system concerning overseas travel.)

The following policies apply in regard to U.S. Department of State public announcements and travel warnings:

Travel Warnings: ACS will not send students to any country for which a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning has been issued. In the event that a program has already commenced and students are currently in the country to which the travel warning applies, ACS, working with the on-site program director and/or other appropriate contacts, will provide students the opportunity to return to the United States. ACS in consultation with the on-site program director, other on-site contacts, the U.S. Department of State, U.S. consulates or embassies, appropriate ACS administrators, and other experts who are well-informed on issues related to the country will decide whether the entire program should be cancelled.

Public Announcements: ACS will carefully review any Public Announcements issued by the U.S. Department of State for specific regions or countries where security issues are a concern. Decisions in regard to sending or withdrawing students from areas with Public Announcements will be made in the context of current world situations and after consulting with responsible officials of foreign host universities or overseas providers, the U.S. Department of State, appropriate ACS administrators, and other experts who are well-informed on issues related to the region in question.

Public Announcements generally indicate that a specific threat has been received by the embassy or that the department has concluded that there might be a threat to U.S. citizens because of recent political events in that country or the U.S. In most cases these threats are not realized, and most importantly, are not likely to cause difficulties for our students and faculty if they exercise reasonable caution. Such announcements are communicated to students, faculty and staff who are in the specified country or expected to travel there.

Other Situations: ACS also reserves the right to cancel any program when we believe that the security of students may be threatened, even if the United States Department of State has not yet issued a travel warning or a public announcement.

The following information is provided to participants and their parents regarding the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond ACS's control.

ACS CAN NOT:

- guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environment.
- monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
- prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
- assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.

- assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by ACS for events that are not part of the program; or that are beyond the control of ACS and its subcontractors; or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

U.S. Department of State Public Announcements and Travel Warnings:

The Department of State has developed a set of reports designed to inform travelers of potential risks. This system of reporting is more fully explained below. The following information is taken from the United States Department of State website (see: http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html):

Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They include such information as location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an optional section entitled "Safety/Security." On limited occasions, we also restate in this section any U.S. Embassy advice given to official employees. Consular Information Sheets generally do not include advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decisions concerning travel to a particular country.

Public Announcements are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are made any time there is a perceived threat and usually have Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, bomb threats to airlines, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries where avoidance of travel is recommended will have Travel Warnings as well as Consular Information Sheets.