

CRIME COMBATING IN NICARAGUA

This report describes overall crime and safety situation in Nicaragua. Nicaragua has low overall reported crime rates, but U.S. citizens still experience a significant number of violent and non-violent crimes. In 2015, the most frequent violent crime reported by U.S. citizens was robbery (accounting for 87 percent of all violent crime reports). U.S. citizens also reported sexual assaults and other violent crimes. For 40 percent of robberies, victims reported that the perpetrator possessed a weapon, but acts of physical violence either with or without a weapon were reported 59 percent of the time (over double the rate of 2014). The municipalities with the highest rates of criminal complaints per 10,000 inhabitants were Bluefields, Granada, Ciudad Sandino, Puerto Cabezas, Diriamba, and Granada. In 2015, the majority of crime reports by U.S. citizens were from the municipalities of Managua, Granada, Rivas, and Leon. The most frequent locations where crimes were reported were roadways, hotels, restaurants, and tourist areas. The majority of violent crimes were reported to occur at night. U.S. citizens also reported incidents of non-confrontational thefts and burglaries. In 2015, the most frequently reported non-violent crime from U.S. citizens was theft from or parts of a motor vehicle. Over half of thefts from motor vehicles occurred while drivers and occupants were distracted by a flat tire. According to the government's 2014 official statistics of reported crimes (the most recent available), the overall homicide rate was 8 people per 100,000 inhabitants. The homicide rate in the Southern Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region was 33 people per 100,000 inhabitants. Other areas with homicide rates significantly above the national average were the "Mining Triangle," which is comprised of the three Northern Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region municipalities of Siuna, Rosita and, Bonanza (18 people per 100,000 inhabitants); Jinotega (14 people per 100,000 inhabitants); the Northern Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (13 people per 100,000 inhabitants); and Zelaya Central (12 people per 100,000 inhabitants). So, consider the widespread types of crimes committed in Nicaragua.

One of those is transportation-safety situation. Road conditions vary, and the risk of traffic accidents is enhanced by frequent road hazards, pedestrians, and other drivers. Driving is on the right side. Although some of the principal highways connecting the major cities are in good condition, drivers should be aware that torrential seasonal rains take a heavy toll on all roads. Roads commonly have potholes, have unpainted speed bumps, are poorly illuminated, narrow, without shoulders, and often missing manhole covers. Speed limits vary depending on the type of road, and traffic rules are inconsistently enforced. Be on the lookout for detours and slow traffic. In general, road signs are poor or non-existent. Drivers will frequently encounter vehicles without lights, animals, bicycles, and pedestrians, all of which are difficult to see at night, even on main thoroughfares in Managua. Motorcycles dart in/out of traffic with little/no warning, taxis stop in the middle of the road to negotiate with potential passengers, and buses often travel in the oncoming lane to avoid traffic jams. Sidewalks are not common, so drivers must be aware that pedestrians often walk on main roads, including on busy thoroughfares, and often do not look both ways before crossing the street. Pedestrian bridges, when present, are often not used. Many vehicles are in poor condition, travel very slowly, and break down without warning. Drivers should be especially careful on curves and hills, as many drivers will pass on blind spots, and vehicles stop without warning and pass in "no passing" zones. Road travel after dark and in dark areas is especially hazardous.

Transit police conduct most traffic-related enforcement stops on foot at static locations sometimes marked by traffic cones in which officer(s) will signal to a driver to pull over. Police vehicle enforcement stops are less common. After being given a traffic violation, the normal process involves police confiscating the driver's license until the fine is paid. After paying the associated fee at a bank, the driver must go with proof of payment to Transit Police Headquarters (or a police station if it occurs outside of Managua) to recover the license and show proof of payment. In practice, however, foreigners are rarely able to recover their licenses even after paying their fees due to delays in transferring the license from the place of detention to the Transit Police office. Most foreigners leave the country before the transfer takes place.

The second of those is political, economic, religious, and ethnic violence. 2016 is an election year, and the potential for demonstrations and political rallies remains high.

In 2011, national elections led to widespread demonstrations and political rallies in Managua. Violence also escalated in rural communities. Confrontations between the largest political parties erupted along main thoroughfares and locked down Managua for brief periods. The use of riot control, mortars, and rocks as well as sheer numbers of people led to some precarious situations.

In 2015, political, economic, and social demonstrations occurred frequently. A large number of demonstrations involved opposition to the proposed building of an interoceanic canal and demands for transparent elections. The motives for other demonstrations included workers/veterans rights, availability of public utilities, traffic/transportation concerns, and other national issues.

Most demonstrations begin peacefully, but the presence of counter-demonstrators or police can lead to an escalation in tension and violence. Typically, protests in Managua take place at major intersections or rotundas. Outside of the capital, they often take place in the form of road/highway blockages. Protests have included the use of gunfire, tear gas, fireworks, rock throwing, tire/vehicle burning, and road blocks. And the third of those is medical emergencies. Emergency phone numbers vary by department. In Managua, dial 101 for the Emergency Line for International Tourists (English and Spanish are spoken; however, this number is only available to Claro cell phones). Dispatchers will coordinate an emergency response. Dial 128 for Cruz Roja (Red Cross) ambulance service (Spanish only). Dial *911 for fire department for fire or ambulance (Spanish only). Medical care is very limited, particularly outside Managua. Basic medical services are available in Managua and many small towns/villages. However, treatment for serious medical issues is often unavailable or available only in Managua. Emergency ambulance services (which are poor and do not meet U.S. standards) and certain types of medical equipment, medications, and treatments are not widely available. Physicians and hospital personnel frequently do not speak English, and medical reports are written in Spanish. Patients must have good Spanish language skills to utilize local medical resources.

Individuals are taken to the nearest hospital that will accept a patient. This is usually a public hospital unless the patient or someone acting on his/her behalf indicates that s/he can pay for a private hospital. Payment for medical services is typically done on a cash basis, although the few private hospitals will accept major credit cards for payment. With rare exceptions, U.S. health insurance plans are not accepted. Travelers should prepare to pay medical practitioners and hospitals at the time of service or even before treatment is given. In most cases, private hospitals will require full payment or a significant deposit before any treatment will be given, even in life or death cases.

So, whatever the reasons for Nicaragua's success, the world is starting to pay attention. Panama, Venezuela and Peru have sought security advice, while Granera has been invited to explain Nicaragua's security model to the European Union. Honduran President Porfirio Lobo recently paid a visit to Managua to discuss issues of organized crime and violence, and said that he was especially interested in Nicaragua's social policies; "It's very important for us to know their experiences." Granera, who attended another security conference in Panama this week, said that Nicaragua had been described as a "new security paradigm."

Список використаних джерел

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