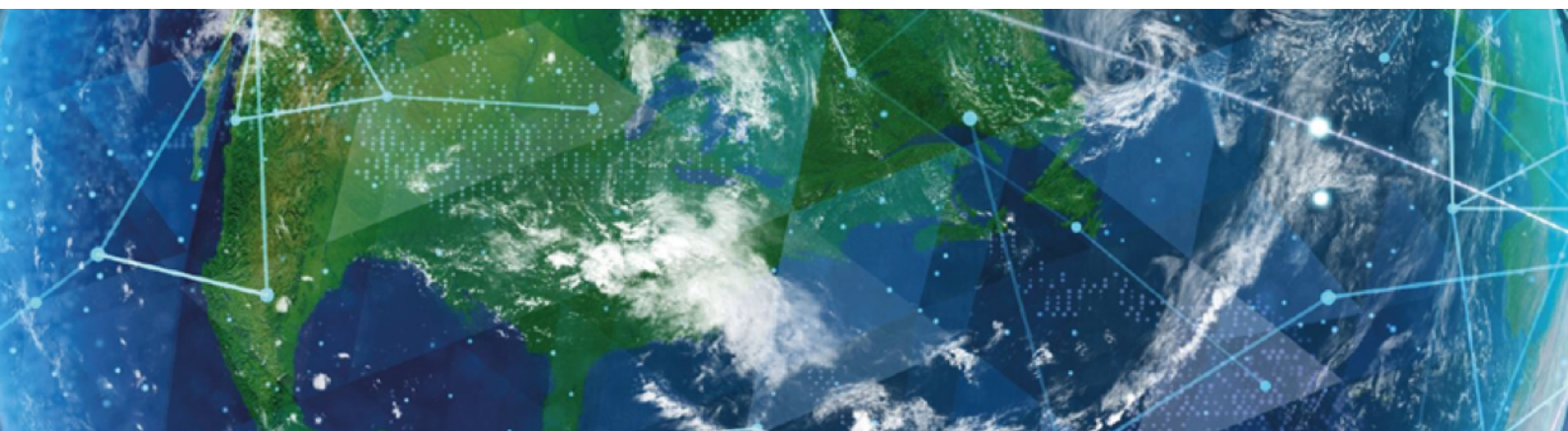


Country Travel Advice Report

Sierra Leone

Overall Risk Rating: **Moderate - High | 3.50**



Contents

Country Risk Rating Breakdown	3
Country Overview	4
Security	
Overview	4
Political	
Overview	4
Infrastructural	
Overview	4
Environmental	
Overview	4
Medical	
Overview	4
Fact Box	6
Travel Risk Advice	7
Threat Scale Reference	10

Country Risk Rating Breakdown

Country Overall Risk Rating				Moderate - High 3.50	
Security	Environmental	Infrastructural	Political	Medical	
Moderate 3.25	Moderate - High 3.50	High 4.00	Moderate 3.00	High 4.25	

Country Overview

Moderate - High | 3.50

Sierra Leone is a mineral-rich but impoverished country in West Africa. The country has taken positive steps in post-conflict reconstruction since the end of a civil war in 2002, but it has struggled to recover from a deadly Ebola outbreak and slump in commodity prices in recent years. Limited infrastructure, chronic corruption and health risks are seen as some of the other main factors inhibiting foreign investment and development, and Sierra Leone remains among the poorest countries in the world, with notably high maternal and infant mortality rates. Much of the country's infrastructure was destroyed during the civil war, and despite ongoing rebuilding efforts, improving the road network along with telecommunications, water and electricity service access has proven challenging. The already limited healthcare facilities were further strained by the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak. The primary threats to foreign travelers are petty theft, assorted crimes of opportunity and road traffic accidents. The country is also susceptible to recurring floods and landslides, with climate change and a lack of preparedness compounding the impact of such natural disasters.

Security

Moderate | 3.25

Overview

Sierra Leone has made significant stability gains since the end of a devastating civil war in 2002, and there are no indications that the country could slip back into armed conflict. There are no known terrorist groups operating in Sierra Leone or which are assessed as posing a threat to foreign interests in the country. Criminal activity is widespread across Sierra Leone, with the main threat to foreign travelers and expatriates being primarily non-violent, opportunistic crime. Civil unrest is frequent, with the propensity of security forces to respond in a heavy-handed manner often escalating the situation.

Political

Moderate | 3.00

Overview

There are no immediate threats to the stability of the current regime, although entrenched widespread poverty and high unemployment remain flashpoints for social unrest. Corruption is pervasive across all levels of government and remains a significant obstacle to foreign investment. State institutions remain weak and are undermined by a lack of resources, training as well as corruption.

Infrastructural

High | 4.00

Overview

There are serious safety concerns over air travel by Sierra Leone-based airlines.

Overland travel in the country is hazardous due to poor road conditions, inadequate lighting and frequent traffic accidents.

The Port of Freetown is considered relatively efficient.

The provision of utilities and service delivery is susceptible to regular disruptions.

There are increasing concerns over the threat from cyber-attacks, which can cause damage to the country's economy.

Environmental

Moderate - High | 3.50

Overview

Flooding and landslides are common during the wet season between May and October, and can cause widespread devastation and disruptions. Remnant landmines from the civil war era pose a limited risk in some parts of the country's northern and eastern regions.

Medical

High | 4.25

Overview

Sierra Leone has been officially free of the Ebola Virus Disease since 2016, although a number of insect and water-borne diseases remain prevalent and continue to pose a risk to travelers. Standard of medical care and facilities are limited in the country. Medications may be in short supply, and counterfeit drugs remain a problem.

Fact Box

Government Type	Presidential Republic
Population	6,624,933 (2020)
Currency	Sierra Leonean Leone
Languages	English (official, regular use limited to literate minority), Mende (principal vernacular in the south), Temne (principal vernacular in the north), Krio (English-based Creole used as a first language by 10% of the population but understood by 95%)
Time Zone	UTC
Religions	Muslim 78.6%, Christian 20.8%, other 0.3%, unspecified 0.2%
Traffic	Drives on the right
Plug Types	Type D and G
Ethnicities	Temne 35.5%, Mende 33.2%, Limba 6.4%, Kono 4.4%, Fullah 3.4%, Loko 2.9%, Koranko 2.8%, Sherbro 2.6%, Mandingo 2.4%, Creole 1.2%, other Sierra Leone 4.7%, other foreign 0.3%, unspecified 0.2%.
Drinking Water	Not Safe to Drink
Additional Information	Significant Dates: January 1 - New Year's Day March 8/9 - International Women's Day April 10 - Good Friday April 13 - Easter Monday April 27 - Independence Day May 24/25 - Eid al-Fitr July 31 - Tabaski October 29 - The Prophet's Birthday (Maulud Un Nabi) December 25 - Christmas Day December 26 - Boxing Day
International Country Code	+232

Travel Risk Advice

Vaccinations and Key Health Risks

You should visit a health care professional at least four to six weeks prior to the trip. Travellers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and annual flu vaccine.

Most travellers will require vaccines from:

- Yellow Fever

Dependent on work, reason for travel, or underlying health conditions, some travellers visiting Sierra Leone may require vaccines from:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Rabies
- Malaria
- Typhoid

Pre-departure

- Crime is problematic, and a risk assessment should have been completed against the travel itinerary before travelling. Travellers should undertake a pre-travel security brief on the associated threats and operating environment, and should have undertaken annual travel security training. Business travellers should also undertake anti-corruption and bribery briefing.
- Standards of medical care and facilities are limited, and travellers should have received a medical brief and identify sources of medical support in country. Travellers should also have adequate travel insurance in place to enable rapid medical treatment or emergency extraction and should ensure that detailed contingency operations, business continuity, crisis management and evacuation plans are in place should the situation in country deteriorate significantly.
- Civil unrest is frequent in Sierra Leone, and travellers should conduct research into the current stability in-country. If the travel dates coincide with planned elections, anniversaries or significant dates, additional measures may need to be taken. Travellers should confirm that businesses will be open and services will be operational. Periods of long-term unrest may result in closure of banks, and withdrawal of local currency; travellers should ensure that they have adequate amounts of cash.
- Travellers should provide friends and family a copy of their travel itinerary, make a copy of important travel and identification documents, and if applicable, obtain their visa prior to arrival. Travellers should also have information on their meeting host, accommodation, relevant embassies and trusted local contacts easily accessible.
- Travellers should seek to register the trip, and maintain regular communications, with the appropriate diplomatic missions in country.

On Arrival

- Freetown is served by Lungi International Airport, which is located across the Sierra Leone River and accessible by a speed boat or ferry. The boats and ferries are usually well maintained with TV and wi-fi, although petty crime has been reported. Passengers are disembarked at Aberdeen Bridge, Kissy Ferry Terminal or Murray Town. Travel to Freetown by road is time-consuming and dangerous.
- Travellers should aim to arrive into Freetown in daylight where possible. If arriving into Lungi airport late, it is recommended to stay at a hotel at Lungi Airport, and travel across the river in the morning.
- Travellers should have a meet and greet procedure in place, and proceed through arrivals in a timely manner, and depart as soon as practicably possible.
- Travellers should carry a copy of their travel documents at all times.

In Transit

- Travellers should use vetted transport providers, with security trained drivers in low-profile vehicles. The use of an Executive Protection Agent or a security co-ordinator may also be required, dependent upon travel plans and task. Travel should be pre-booked as much as possible, in order that safe routes may be identified. Travellers should further phone ahead to the destinations before departure and should not detour from planned itinerary.
- Travellers should vary routes and times, and should minimise road travel after dark. Police checkpoints are common throughout the country, where security forces check documentation. Illegal road blocks are also put in place by children or road repair crews.
- Travellers should only travel with minimal non-essential valuable items, and valuables should not be displayed publically.

At Your Hotel

- Travellers should stay at a reputable hotel with good standards of international-level security. Hotels should be located in areas of town that have not previously witnessed protests or demonstrations, or are not otherwise marred by ethnic or political tensions.
- On arrival at the hotel, ensure the driver stays on site until your check-in has been confirmed. Similarly before departing to the airport when leaving the hotel, ensure your driver waits until your flight check-in is confirmed.
- Travellers should favour rooms on floors between 2 and 6, and as far as possible from the main entrance and principal public areas. Rooms with access from a side balcony or fire escape should be avoided.
- Travellers should always lock the door (and any connecting doors) to your room, and use the chain or spy hole when receiving a visitor. Do not open the door to your hotel room, especially late at night, until you have confirmed the visitor's identity but meet strangers in the lobby, not in your room.

In the Street

- Travellers should avoid leaving the hotel, or secure accommodation, after dark.
- Travellers should avoid sensitive areas, and during periods of heightened tension travellers should avoid symbolic places - such police stations, government buildings, fast food restaurants, and banks – and locations of previous protests.
- Travellers should be aware of the national culture and behavioural expectations. Same-sex relations are criminalised and penalties can include fines and imprisonment. Homophobia and negative attitudes towards LGBT issues are prevalent. As such, travellers should carefully weigh the risks of attending related rallies and events, as well as displaying overt signs of their sexual orientation in public, such as holding hands.
- Travellers should keep a low profile, and should not become involved in local political issues and avoid discussing politically sensitive topics in public. Travellers should be aware that photographing government buildings or military facilities may result in detention by authorities. Travellers should observe any curfews or orders issued by government, and heed all other advice.
- Travellers should avoid any demonstrations, protests and rallies, which may attract security forces and law enforcement officers and present a dynamic and volatile environment.
- Travellers should avoid overt displays of wealth and dress discreetly and appropriately to environment. Do not display money, jewellery or valuables and keep a low profile.
- Travellers should settle small bills with cash, and have a spare credit card available. Travellers should use only small denominations of the local currency, and keep large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on your person. Reduce the contents of your wallet or purse contents, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships and accounts. Do not use credit or debit cards unless absolutely necessary and then only at respected, well-known retail and service establishments.
- Travellers should ensure that their mobile phone is carried with sufficient battery life and programmed with appropriate emergency numbers. Travellers should also carry an ID card or passport and emergency medical information.
- Travellers should be aware of their location and surroundings. Avoid high-crime areas and of walking through dimly lit streets after dark. Travellers should know routes and carry a map if necessary, but keep it concealed.
- In crowded situations, travellers should be aware of jostling as this may be a ploy for pick-pockets. Travellers should also be aware of people loitering, and also that attackers may first pass their victim to attack from behind.
- Travellers should ignore verbal 'bait' from passers-by, do not get into an argument and avoid eye contact with strangers.

COVID-19 Information

Travel Restrictions: As of Sept. 22, authorities maintain COVID-19-related domestic and international measures.

Domestic Measures

Individuals must show proof of vaccination to access places, such as public facilities, sporting venues, hotels, bars, and restaurants. Public gatherings, including weddings and receptions, may resume with strict health protocols in place. Facemasks are no longer mandatory in public spaces for vaccinated individuals.

International Travel Restrictions

All incoming and departing travelers must register on a travel portal accessible by clicking [here](#). Unvaccinated inbound and outbound travelers must book an arrival and departure test via the online travel form. The test must be taken within 48 hours of departure from Sierra Leone. Those who test positive on arrival in Sierra Leone will be isolated at a government-approved facility.

The nation's land borders are open to international traffic under the same aforementioned health protocols.

Threat Scale Reference

Threat Rating	Implication
1 - Negligible	The operating environment is benign and there are only isolated threats to business and/or travel.
2 – Low	The operating environment is generally permissive, although there are a limited number of threats to business and/or travel that requires basic mitigations.
3 – Moderate	The operating environment is challenging and there are serious threats to business and/or travel that requires some mitigations.
4 – High	The operating environment is hostile and there are significant threats to business, personal safety and/or travel, requiring comprehensive mitigations and planning.
5 – Extreme	The operating environment is characterised by pervasive direct threats to business, personal safety and/or travel, requiring strict risk management procedures.

Disclaimer

Drum Cussac Group Ltd makes no representation, warranties or assurance against risk with respect to the contents or use of this document, and specifically disclaims any express or implied warranties or usefulness for any particular purpose of this publication. Recommendations made are based on information available at the time of writing. No express or implied warranty is given in respect of any judgment made or to changes, or any unforeseen escalation of any factors affecting any such judgment.

Copyright

Copyright 2016 Drum Cussac Group Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express prior consent of Drum Cussac Group Ltd.

Drum Cussac is a global consultancy delivering intelligence-led, technology-enabled risk, security and crisis management solutions to leading international organisations. Our specialist operations teams are recognised experts in providing a highly responsive and proactive resource in challenging and demanding situations.



Drum Cussac Group Ltd

+44 (0) 1202 802 060

+44 (0) 1202 937 707 (24hr)

info@drum-cussac.com

drum-cussac.com

[@DrumCussac](https://www.linkedin.com/company/drum-cussac)

[LinkedIn.com/company/drum-cussac](https://www.linkedin.com/company/drum-cussac)

Global Presence Europe | North America | Latin America | Africa | Middle East | Asia and Pacific