

The situation in Egypt

01 February 2011

Overview

Events in Egypt have unfolded at a rapid pace in the last two weeks, leaving many Universities and Colleges with travel groups, study abroad participants and faculty on the ground in Egypt. The situation is still volatile and is changing hourly. In the past five days, it has changed quickly from protests to violent protests to a possible overthrow of the government of 30 years. We expect that these changes will continue and the situation will remain fluid. We have compiled information on steps that all institutions should be taking or have already taken to ensure the most orderly protection of your most valuable assets – your staff, alumna and students.

Current situation

- As of 28th January 2011, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advised against all but essential travel to Cairo (all four governorates, including Giza, Alexandria, Luxor and Suez). They also recommend that British nationals without a pressing need to be in Cairo, Alexandria or Suez leave by commercial means where it is safe to do so.
- The nationwide curfew in place has been extended from 1500 to 0800 local time. British nationals should observe instructions and advice by local security authorities and avoid public gatherings, disturbances and stay indoors wherever possible.
- Many Universities and Colleges have already evacuated their students and travellers, however, many more have not. Most schools in Cairo have cancelled classes for this week but have not made the decision beyond that.

Actions recommended for travellers

All persons traveling with or on behalf of a University or College should be advised to take the following actions:

- Obey curfew orders and remain indoors during curfew hours.
- Any travellers currently in Egypt should consider leaving as soon as they can safely do so.
- Travellers should remain in contact with their airlines or tour operators concerning flight schedules, and arrange to get to the airport well in advance of any curfew hours.
- In the event of demonstrations, travellers should remain in their residences or hotels until the situation stabilises.
- British nationals are urged to remain alert to local security developments and to be vigilant regarding their personal security – this includes avoiding any areas where there are demonstrations or have been demonstrations. If caught, travellers need to exit the area as quickly as possible, following the instructions of the police/army.
- Travellers should monitor local news broadcasts by television, radio or internet.
- In resort areas, travellers should ask tour guides and hotel officials about any planned demonstrations in the locations they plan to visit.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss the matter in greater detail, please contact your local Marsh team or:

rachel.x.phillips@marsh.com

(Higher Education)

jon.taylor@marshbrokers.com

(Further Education)

Communication procedures

Although the situation is changing rapidly, there are many steps that a University or College should take in order to maintain a sense of order and increase consistent communication.

- If the Institution has a safety or emergency plan, it should be activated.
- All contact information from the student or traveller should be verified and updated if necessary. Frequent text messages are the most efficient means of communication in limited connectivity situations.
- For parents or family of travellers, the institution should consider some type of regularly scheduled update multiple times in a day to keep the situation calm for all involved.
- If there is a group leader, that person should have a defined set of responsibilities outlined to them so that they understand what is expected of them in terms of communication, control and updates to you and to their group. This communication should include instructions on communication with the press.
- The Institution should ensure that all British students are registered with LOCATE at the following website: <https://www.locate.fco.gov.uk/locateportal/> If the traveller does not have access, then their family member or the school should consider entering the information. This allows the government to account for each citizen in the event of a mandatory evacuation.
- All travellers and their families should be advised to monitor the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk for updates. Additionally, they should monitor other Embassy sites such as the US and Australia for an update on what other entities are doing.

Safety and security

British nationals travelling to, through of from Egypt where there have been disturbances are advised to follow the advice below and stay indoors wherever possible. You are advised to check with your airline or tour operator to confirm your travel plans and you should not travel to the airport without having a confirmed flight. British nationals in Egypt requiring assistance or advice can call [020 7008 0000](tel:02070080000) from the UK or [\(02\) 2791 6000](tel:0227916000) in Egypt.

The British Embassy in Cairo is located close to the main site of demonstrations in Cairo therefore making access difficult. Please call the Embassy in advance if you intend to visit, on [\(002\) \(02\) 2791 6000](tel:0020227916000). The internet is currently not working and mobile phone coverage is intermittent.

Travellers should:

- Follow news on the TV and radio closely
- Stay away from demonstrations and large gatherings of people
- Avoid public buildings or other sites which may become the focus of demonstrations, such as Tahrir Square in central Cairo
- You should respect and advice or instructions from the local security authorities or tour operators.

If the travellers decide to go to Cairo Airport, they should take:

- Cash as they may not have access to an ATM or credit card while waiting.
- Food, water and medicines for a stay of 2-3 days. There will be limited supplies available at the airport given the chaotic nature of operations right now.
- Phone with charger to ensure some means of communication while waiting.