

Travel: UK varies advice on travel to Lebanon

The UK Foreign Office has varied its travel advice in respect of Lebanon. Seemingly unable to avoid snide political comment, it nevertheless contains valueable information.

Official Text of Notice FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE 14 September 2006 Lebanon: Foreign Office amends travel advice The Foreign Office today revised its travel advice for Lebanon. We are now advising against all but essential travel to Lebanon but continue to advise against all travel south of the Litani River. The travel advice summary now reads: "We advise against all but essential travel to Lebanon. On 12 July 2006 two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped on the border between Israel and Lebanon. This led to a major outbreak of violence, including major Israeli strikes across Lebanon in which buildings, roads and bridges have been destroyed and hundreds of people killed and thousands injured. Following the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701, a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon came into effect on 14 August 2006. While this has largely been observed so far, the security situation remains uncertain, and there remains much unexploded ordnance in Southern Lebanon and the Northern Beka'a valley region. "If you are in Lebanon you should exercise extreme caution and register with the British Embassy. You should keep abreast of the latest developments by listening to BBC and other English language broadcasts, and heed local advice. "There is a serious risk of danger from unexploded bombs being accidentally detonated. This risk is greatest in the south of Lebanon, where the most ordnance fell. You should heed local advice in areas which have not been declared safe from unexploded ordnance. "Israeli warplanes have struck all crossing points on the border with Syria apart from the one at al-Arida on the coast. While these crossings are now passable, there remains a risk of increased tension. The blockade of Lebanon's ports and airports has now been lifted and Beirut airport has reopened to regular scheduled services. "There is a high threat of terrorism in Lebanon, with a risk that Western and British interests may be targeted. "You should carry identity papers with you at all times." We have amended your travel advice from "against all travel" to advising "against all but essential travel" now that there is a ceasefire in place and the blockade has been lifted. However we continue to advise against all travel south of the Litani river. We also advise travellers to exercise extreme caution. Full details of the revised travel advice for Lebanon are available on the Foreign Office website (www.fco.gov.uk). FCO Travel Advice can also be obtained on the following telephone number: 0845 850 2829. FCO Travel Advice is kept under constant review. This advice is based on our latest assessment of the situation in Lebanon.