Continued Vigilance Regarding Terrorist Threats in Uganda and East Africa

Recent events, such as the bombing of a United Nation (UN) compound in Mogadishu and a more recent bomb attack at a University Graduation there, highlight that Al Qaida-linked entities, such as al-Shabaab, continue to launch attacks against both "hard" and "soft" targets.

Such events and reports serve as a reminder that terrorist activity can strike anywhere, including Uganda. Furthermore, terrorists have in the past also used holidays as a time frame for launching attacks.

Repeated below for your information is the most recent world wide caution for East Africa that was re-published by the Department of State on July 29, 2009:

A number of al-Qaida operatives and other extremists are believed to be operating in and around East Africa. As a result of the conflict in Somalia, some of these individuals may seek to relocate elsewhere in the region. Americans considering travel to the region and those already there should review their plans carefully, remain vigilant with regard to their personal security, and exercise caution. Terrorist actions may include suicide operations, bombings, kidnappings, or targeting maritime vessels. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. Increased security at official U.S. facilities has led terrorists to seek softer targets such as hotels, beach resorts, prominent public places, and landmarks. In particular, terrorists and like-minded extremists may target international aid workers, civil aviation, and seaports in various locations throughout East Africa, including Somalia. On July 17, three NGO workers were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen from their base in Mandera, Kenya, located on the border with Somalia. Americans in remote areas or border regions where military or police authority is limited or non-existent could also become targets.

Americans considering travel by sea near the Horn of Africa or in the southern Red Sea should exercise extreme caution, as there has been a notable increase in armed attacks, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom at sea by pirates in recent months. Merchant vessels continue to be hijacked in Somali territorial waters, while others have been hijacked as far as 300 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia, Yemen, and Kenya in international waters.

U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the U.S. Embassy’s website the U.S. Department of State’s, Bureau of Consular Affairs’ website www.travel.state.gov, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information can be found. The U.S. Embassy also encourages U.S. citizens to review to "A Safe Trip Abroad," found at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety1747.html, which includes valuable security information for those both living and traveling abroad. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada, or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.

U.S. citizens are advised to register and update their contact information with the U.S. Embassy in Kampala. The U.S. Embassy is located at Plot 1577 Ggaba Road. The phone number is (256) (0) (414) 306 001 or (256) (0) (414) 259 791, fax (256) (0) (414) 258 451, email: KampalaUSCitizen@state.gov and U.S. Embassy Kampala website: http://kampala.usembassy.gov. In the case of an emergency outside business hours, or during any suspension of public services, U.S. citizens may reach the embassy duty officer at the same numbers.