The State Department alerts U.S. citizens residing in or traveling to Uganda to the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections on February 18, 2011. U.S. citizens in Uganda during this period are urged to exercise caution and remain abreast of the security situation throughout the election period. This Travel Alert expires on April 18, 2011.

Uganda’s 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections generally were orderly and peaceful, and there are no indications that the 2011 elections will be any different. Nevertheless, the State Department recommends that U.S. citizens monitor the local news for changing security developments throughout the elections. Instances of localized unrest related to the elections are possible, and U.S. citizens should be aware that even peaceful gatherings and demonstrations can turn violent. U.S. citizens should maintain a high level of security awareness at all times and avoid political rallies, demonstrations, and crowds of any kind.

Ugandan authorities have increased patrols and police presence due to the July 2010 terrorist bombings in Kampala, the December 2010 bombing of a Uganda-bound bus in Kenya, continued threats against Uganda by the terrorist group al-Shabaab, and heightened domestic tensions that accompany competitive political campaigns. U.S. citizens should be extremely vigilant with regard to their personal security in public places frequented by foreigners such as hotels, resorts, upscale shopping centers, restaurants, places of worship, and outdoor recreational events.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive the most up-to-date security information. You should keep all of your information in STEP up to date, including your current phone number and a current email address where you can be reached in case of an emergency.

U.S. citizens should also consult the Country Specific Information Sheet for Uganda and the Worldwide Caution, both located on the Department of State’s web site. Up-to-date information on safety and security is available toll-free at 1-888-407-4747 from within the United States and Canada, or at regular toll rates at 1-202-501-4444 for callers from outside the United States and Canada, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).