



## **PALANCA NEWS**



Welcome to the Palanca News, a newsletter from the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Angola for the American Citizen community. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with updated information about consular services available to Americans abroad, as well as provide information about health and safety issues for travelers. We hope you will find this newsletter useful, and we welcome your suggestions and input.

### **March 2009**

#### **Inside This Issue**

- Contact us
- Registration
- SMS Text Messaging Alert Network
- Upcoming holidays/closures
- The Pope's Visit
- Country Specific Information Sheet for Angola
- Recent Warden Messages
- Tax Information
- Extra pages for your passport
- Passport requirements for minors under 16
- Passport cards
- Passport fees
- Foreign entry requirements for other countries
- Voting Information
- What Makes You Want to Vote Slogan Contest
- Useful web pages

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#### **Contact Us**

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- Fax: (244) 222-641-259
- Email: [Consularluanda@state.gov](mailto:Consularluanda@state.gov)
- Web page: <http://angola.usembassy.gov>
- 24-hour Duty Officer cell phone: 923-404-209 (for emergencies only)
- Embassy web site: <http://luanda.usembassy.gov/>
- American Citizen Services hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 14:00-16:30 and Friday 8:30 -11:30; Emergency services 24/7

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### **Registration with the U.S. Embassy Luanda**

The cornerstone of our efforts to keep the American traveling public aware of problems threatening their safety and security is our Consular Information Program. If you would like to receive important information issued by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Luanda, please register your stay in Angola by using this online registration service: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. By indicating your e-mail address at the time of registration you will receive all U.S. Embassy bulletins and warden messages automatically. Also, if any of your information changes, please make sure your information is updated.

### **SMS Text Messaging Alert Network In Angola**

The U.S. Embassy in Luanda is pleased to announce our SMS Text Messaging ALERT network is operational. American citizens who wish to receive alerts via SMS text should ensure they are registered online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. At present, the system only works with UNITEL phone numbers.

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### **Upcoming Holidays/Closures**

April 10- **Good Friday**. The US Embassy will be closed.

March 20-March 23 - **Papal visit**. The US Embassy will be open for normal business hours.

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## **Country Specific Information Sheet for Angola**

Please note the changes recently made regarding travel and safety in Angola:

[http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1096.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1096.html)

(Updated February 20, 2009)

This replaces the Country Specific Information for Angola dated June 20, 2008, to update sections on Medical Facilities and Health Information, Aviation Safety Oversight and Registration/Embassy Location.

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### **Recent Warden Messages**

#### **Outbreak of Ebola in Congo**

January 29, 2009

This warden message is being issued to alert U.S. citizens to the Government of Angola's decision to close the border between the province of Lunda Norte and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) due to an outbreak of the Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Following the November 2008 outbreak of Ebola in Kasai Occidental Province in south-central Democratic Republic of Congo, the Government of Angola closed the border between DRC and Lunda Norte. According to press accounts, this recent outbreak in the DRC has resulted in at least 13 confirmed deaths and 40 people becoming infected. Viral hemorrhagic fevers are a collection of viral illnesses that run from mild illness to some of the deadliest viral illnesses known that can kill 50 to 90 percent of its victims.

The Angolan Ministry of Health has advised that there are no identified cases of Ebola in Angola.

The military and police have been urged to be on alert for any possible signs of Ebola in the eastern and northern provinces of Moxico, Malange, Uige, Lunda Sul and Lunda Norte because of their proximity with the DRC. American citizens should take the necessary precautions when traveling in these areas.

Additional information on Ebola can be found on the Centers for Disease Control's website at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mnpages/dispages/ebola/abroad.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mnpages/dispages/ebola/abroad.htm).

U.S. citizens living or traveling in Angola are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy's Consular Section through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>, and to also review the Embassy's Internet website at <http://angola.usembassy.gov/index.html> for the latest travel and security information within Angola.

Americans without Internet access may register directly at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Registration will permit the consular section to contact a registered individual in case of an emergency. For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Worldwide Caution, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings can be found.

Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

World Wide Caution: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1161.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html)

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## **Tax Information**

The IRS has published a new flyer for U.S. taxpayers living abroad to assist taxpayers in locating useful tax information to help in the preparation of their tax returns and/or in resolving tax account problems. To see it, please visit: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf>.

Also, for online guidance in preparing your 2008 returns, please consult Publication 54 (2008), Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad by going to: <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p54/index.html>

**Question: I am a U.S. citizen working for a U.S. firm in a foreign country. Is any part of my wages or expenses tax deductible?**

**Answer:**

- U.S. citizens are taxed on their worldwide income.
- Some taxpayers may qualify for the foreign earned income exclusion, foreign housing exclusion, or foreign housing deduction, if:
  - Their tax home is in a foreign country,
  - They are either a bona fide resident of a foreign country or countries for an uninterrupted period that includes an entire tax year, or
  - They are physically present in a foreign country or countries for at least 330 full days during any period of 12 consecutive months.
- If the taxpayer is temporarily away from his or her tax home in the United States on business (less than a year), he or she may be able to claim a foreign tax credit if required to pay qualifying foreign tax to the foreign country and would not qualify for the foreign earned income exclusion.

The taxpayer may also qualify to deduct away from home expenses (for travel, meals, and lodging), but not against excluded income.

*For tax forms and more information, please visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)*

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### **Extra pages for your US passport**

If the visa/stamp pages in your passport are full or close to full (only two 2 blank pages remaining), you should request that more visa pages be added. To do so please complete and sign form **DS-4085, Application for Additional Visa Pages** and bring it with your passport to the Consular Section during American Citizens Services hours. There is no fee for this service and it usually takes about 20 minutes. It is especially important to check your passport before traveling to South Africa which requires 2 blank visa (not endorsement) pages. In addition, Angola requires at least one blank visa (not endorsement) page for entry into the country.

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### **Passport Application Requirements for all Minors under Age 16**

Minors under age 16 must appear with both parents when submitting an application for a passport. The appearance of both parents cannot be waived, although there is provision, in certain circumstances, for one parent to present a letter of authorization, together with one attending parent. In addition, the application must include the following items:

- Application Form DS-11
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship of the minor
- Documentation of Evidence of Child's Relationship to Parents/Guardians
- Parental Identification
- Notarized Parental Application Authorization Letter (If One Parent is absent)
- Two Passport Photos (2x2 inches, color photo with a plain white background)
- Fees for application (US\$ 85)
- Social Security Number

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### **Passport Cards**

The U.S. passport card is designed to facilitate entry and expedite document processing at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The card cannot be used to travel by air and will have the same validity period as a passport book: 10 years for an adult, five for children 15 and younger. For adults who already have a passport book, they may apply for the card as a passport renewal and pay only \$20. First-time applicants will pay \$45 for adult cards and \$35 for children.

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### **Passport Fees**

<b>What Are You Applying For?</b>	<b>Application Fee</b>	<b>* Execution Fee</b>	<b>Total Amount You Pay</b>
<b>Passport Book (Age 16 &amp; Older)</b>	\$75.00	\$25.00	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Passport Book (Under Age 16)</b>	\$60.00	\$25.00	<b>\$85.00</b>
<b>Passport Card (Age 16 &amp; Older)</b>	\$20.00	\$25.00	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Passport Card (Under Age 16)</b>	\$10.00	\$25.00	<b>\$35.00</b>

\* The Execution Fee only applies to first time applicants, minors, and when current passport cannot be presented.

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## **Foreign Entry Requirements for Other Countries**

For information on entry requirements for a specific country, please go to the Entry/Exit Requirements section in the Country Specific Information for the country you are interested in at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html). You may also contact the U.S. embassy or consulate of that country for further information.

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## **From the Regional Security Office**

### **Scams Increase as Financial Conditions Worsen**

The Federal Trade Commission ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)) warns that there has been an increase in scams as criminals prey on people who are anxious about bank takeovers and market conditions. Don't let the current financial turmoil make you more vulnerable to being taken advantage of by an identity thief.

If you receive an e-mail which appears to be from your bank, don't click on any links it may contain, no matter how authentic the e-mail seems to be. Phishing e-mails and the fake web pages that they direct you to often look legitimate. Banks seldom request personal or account information via e-mail. If action is really necessary, you should be able to type in the main web address for your bank and log into your account as usual.

How do you avoid being a victim?

- Be suspicious of unsolicited e-mail messages from individuals asking about employees or company proprietary information. If an unknown individual claims to be from a legitimate organization, try to verify his or her identity directly with the company.
- Never provide personal information (passwords, credit card numbers, PIN numbers) and do not respond to e-mail solicitations for this information. This includes clicking on links directing you to do so.
- Do not send sensitive information over the Internet before checking a web site's security.
- Pay attention to the URL of a web site. Malicious web sites may look identical to a legitimate site, but the URL may use a variation in spelling or a different domain (e.g., .com vs. .net).

-- If you are unsure whether an e-mail request is legitimate, try to verify it by contacting the company directly. Do not use contact information provided on a web site connected to the request; rather, check contact information by other means.

-- Information about known phishing attacks is also available online from groups such as the Anti-Phishing Working Group. Their web site may be accessed at: <http://www.antiphishing.org>

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## **VOTING INFORMATION**

### **Upcoming Elections**

- \* March 31st: Special General Election in the 20th Congressional District of New York
- \* April 7th: Special General Election in the 5th Congressional District of Illinois
- \* May 19th: Special General Election in the 32nd Congressional District of California
- \* June 2nd: New Jersey State Primary Election
- \* June 9th: Virginia State Primary Election
- \* November 3rd: State General Elections in New Jersey and Virginia

### **Frequently Asked Questions by U.S. Citizens Abroad**

#### **1) Can I vote absentee?**

You can vote absentee in any election for Federal office if you are a U.S. citizen 18 years or older and are a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States.

#### **2) If I do not maintain a legal residence in the U.S., what is my "legal state of residence"?**

Your "legal state of residence" for voting purposes is the state or territory where you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the United States. This applies to overseas citizens even though you may not have property or other ties in your last state of residence and your intent to return to that state may be uncertain.

When completing block 3 of the [Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request](#) form, be sure to enter the entire mailing address of your last residence, including rural route and number. That address determines your proper voting jurisdiction.

Some states allow children of U.S. citizens residing overseas who are U.S. citizens but who have never resided in the U.S., to claim one of their parent's legal states of residence as their own. [Check out our list of states allowing this.](#)

### **3) How do I register to vote, or apply for an absentee ballot?**

You may register and request an absentee ballot with a single form: The Federal Post Card Application. This application form is accepted by all states and territories and is postage- paid in the U.S. mail, including the Military Postal System and State Department Pouch mail. Hard copies of the form can be obtained from a U.S. embassy or consulate or requested directly from the Federal Voting Assistance Program by [contacting us](#).

An [online version](#) of the Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form is also available. The online version of the form must be mailed in an envelope with proper postage, or mailed using our prepaid return envelope.

Your Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form must be completed, printed, signed, dated and [mailed directly to your local election official](#).

### **4) If I am required to have election materials notarized, how do I do it?**

Notarization can be performed by an U.S. embassy or consular officer, or other official authorized to administer oaths. Most states and territories do not require notarization of voting materials; therefore consult your state's requirements.

### **5) Can I register or vote in-person at the embassy or consulate?**

There are no provisions for in-person voting or on-site registration at U.S. embassies or consulates. U.S. embassy and consular officials can assist U.S. citizens in completing the Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form or other election materials for their state, witness or notarize election materials (if required), and provide other absentee voting information.

You may mail election materials from U.S. embassies and consulates. Remember to make sure that all election material is postmarked.

*Additional information*

The FVAP can be contacted via 1-800-438-8683. Citizens may reach the FVAP toll-free from 67 countries using the toll-free numbers listed on the FVAP website, [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). Questions regarding the above may also be referred to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington DC 20301-1155, and email at [vote@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.ncr.gov).

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**Slogan Contest: What Makes You Want to Vote?**

Sponsored by the Federal Voting Assistance Program

Voting is your constitutional right! What inspires you to vote? What calls you to take action and vote? Now is your chance to express your thoughts on the importance of voting by entering the 2009 Voting Slogan Contest.

The winning slogan will inspire U.S. citizens around the world to exercise one of the fundamental rights of a democracy! The April 9, 2009 deadline for submissions is fast approaching.

The Voting Slogan Contest is a biennial contest sponsored by the Federal Voting Assistance Program in its efforts to promote interest in the democratic process among military members, their families and U.S. citizens worldwide. It is easy to participate. Just create a simple slogan (or slogans) that expresses the importance of voting that will inspire others to vote and submit it to the FVAP.

The contest winner and runners-up will not only feel the satisfaction of knowing that their slogan is helping improve voter awareness, but they will also be given a certificate of recognition from the Department for their contribution to this important endeavor.

There is no limit to the number of entries you may submit, but we request that all slogans be submitted separately. All submissions must be received by **April 9, 2009**.

All submissions must include your full name, branch of service (if military), mailing address, daytime telephone number, fax number (phone and fax numbers should include all necessary country/city codes or DSN prefixes) and e-mail address (if applicable).

***How to submit entries:***

**E-mail:** [slogan@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:slogan@fvap.ncr.gov) Text only (e-mail messages with attachments will be deleted for information security purposes). One slogan per e-mail including contact information.

**Fax:** (703) 696-1352 or DSN 426-1352. Visit the FVAP website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) for international toll-free fax numbers. Submit one slogan per fax including contact information. No cover sheet is necessary.

**Mail:** Federal Voting Assistance Program

Attn: Voting Slogan Contest

1155 Defense Pentagon

Washington DC 20301-1155

If submitting by mail, please type or print on regular letter size paper one slogan per page with contact information on each page.

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### **Useful Web Pages**

- State Department Employment Opportunities - [www.careers.state.gov](http://www.careers.state.gov)
- Travel Advisories - <http://travel.state.gov>
- Internal Revenue Service (for tax forms and information) - [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)
- Department of Motor Vehicles (for driver's license renewal information) - [www.dmv.org](http://www.dmv.org)
- Social Security Administration - [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- U. S. Customs - [www.customs.ustreas.gov](http://www.customs.ustreas.gov)
- Medicare - <http://www.medicare.gov>
- Federal Voting Assistance Program website : [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)
- Us Passport Applications/forms- [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms\\_847.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html)