STATE ISSUES GLOBAL TRAVEL ALERT AMID ISIS FEARS

News /

The State Department on Monday **issued a rare worldwide, three-month travel alert** out of concern about radical Islamic terrorism, in a sign of continuing fears about the militants' reach.

The Monday afternoon alert did not warn of a specific impending attack by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or any affiliated group. Yet its issuance underscores the lingering concern about the group in the United States and abroad, following attacks in Paris, Beirut and the Sinai Peninsula that have collectively killed more than 400 people.

"Current information suggests that [ISIS], al-Qa'ida, Boko Haram, and other terrorist groups continue to plan terrorist attacks in multiple regions," the State Department warning said.

"These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics, using conventional and non-conventional weapons and targeting both official and private interests."

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The likelihood of attacks “will continue,” the government warned, as extremists who have traveled to ISIS’s self-proclaimed caliphate in the Middle East return home.

Additionally, the government warned about the prospect of “lone wolf” attackers who are inspired by an extremist organization — but not directly controlled by one.

“U.S. citizens should exercise vigilance when in public places or using transportation,” the department added. “Be aware of immediate surroundings and avoid large crowds or crowed places.

“Exercise particular caution during the holiday season and at holiday festivals or events.”

The State Department routinely issues travel warnings and alerts for hot spots around the globe but generally limits them to areas with new upheaval or prolonged strife.

Alerts are intended for “short-term events we think you should know about when planning travel to a country,” the department says.

The current alert expires on Feb. 24, 2016.

Fears of ISIS’s reach have skyrocketed in recent weeks. The Nov. 13 attacks in Paris, which left 130 people dead across the city, were the group’s first major coordinated campaign against a Western target, and they sparked concerns that it had evolved beyond its regional focus to adopt a global ambitions.

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