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MALAYSIA PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

June 24, 2005

This Public Announcement reiterates the Department of State's ongoing concern about the safety of American citizens, especially those contemplating travel along the east coast of the Malaysian state of Sabah and overland travel into southern Thailand. The Department of State strongly urges American citizens to defer all non-essential travel to Eastern Sabah's coastal areas and offshore islands. This supersedes the May 17, 2005 Public Announcement and expires on December 23, 2005

There are indications of continued planning of kidnappings, including of foreigners, in eastern Sabah's coastal areas and offshore islands. Several kidnappings and piracy incidents have occurred in this area, most recently in March 2005. The terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), based in the southern Philippines, has been responsible for some of these incidents; other incidents have been attributed to unidentified criminals. Emergency assistance in the area may not always be available. For this reason, American citizens should defer all non-essential travel to eastern Sabah's coastal areas and offshore islands.

The United States Government has designated Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. JI is an extremist group linked to al-Qaeda and other regional terrorist groups, such as the ASG, and has cells operating throughout Southeast Asia. Extremist groups in the region have demonstrated the capability to carry out transnational attacks in locations where Westerners congregate. Terrorist groups do not distinguish between official and civilian targets.

Americans who travel overland from Malaysia to Thailand should be aware of the Department of State's safety and security information for Thailand, which can be found at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1040.html

Americans planning to travel to Malaysia are encouraged to register and update their contact information at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. U.S. citizens should consult the Department of State's Consular Information Sheet for Malaysia and the Department of State's most recent Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, both available at <http://travel.state.gov>. Americans planning to travel to eastern Sabah despite this announcement should also contact the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur before departure by telephone at (60-3) 2168-5000, or by e-mail at klconsular@state.gov. Up-to-date information on security conditions may also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and, from overseas, 1-202 501-4444.

Contact phone numbers for the American Citizen Services Unit
At Consulate General Perth is - 9202-1224, extension 403