

A Drum Cussac Risk Report, June 2016

2016 Olympic Games, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



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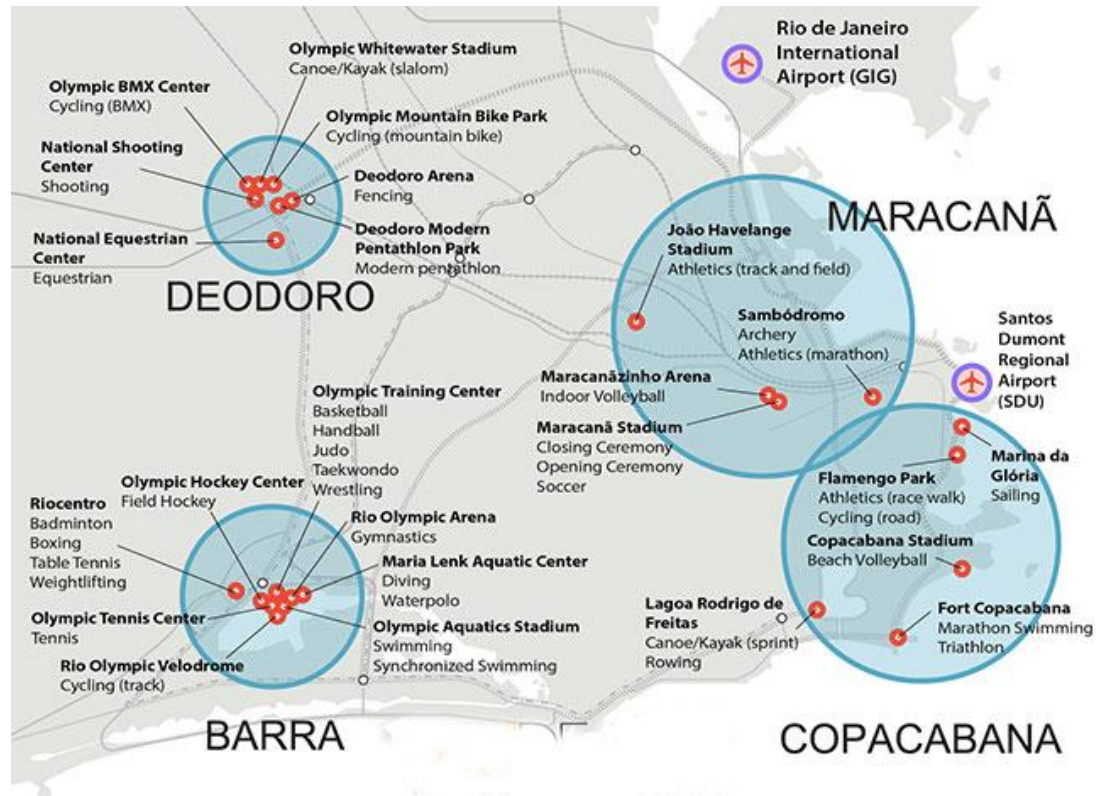
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2016 Olympic Games set to be held from 5 - 21 August (with the Paralympics following 7 – 18 September) 2016 in Rio de Janeiro represent the first time the Olympics will be held in South America, and come just two years after Brazil's vanguard hosting of the 2014 World Cup. Between 300,000 and 500,000 travellers are expected to visit Rio to attend the Games, with some travellers also visiting the cities of Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Manaus, Belo Horizonte and Salvador for limited Olympic football matches there. Many travellers are also expected to combine their Olympics stay with travel to other parts of the country, as Brazil's geography is immense and its tourism industry is relatively well-developed. However, the current report will focus on Rio de Janeiro specifically, as the host city. *A map of the 32 venues spread throughout the city is provided on the following page.*

The principal risk associated with attending the Games is the risk that exists in Rio at any time of year: that of opportunistic crime, including pickpocketing and bag-snatching. Armed muggings, sexual assault and other violent crime are also secondary risks but can be more successfully mitigated by avoiding crime-prone areas. Unrest is uncertain due to the significant changes that have occurred in the country's political scenery so far this year, although mass protests have died down in recent weeks. The prospect of terrorism, traditionally considered low-risk, has also been made more uncertain by mass attacks in Europe and North America since late 2015, but Brazilian officials have committed to increased training and have underscored that they take such concerns seriously. Finally, the public health challenges presented by Zika, while well publicised, are currently considered an unacceptable risk for pregnant women only. Most other medical risks are avoidable with proper caution and mitigation.

OFFICIAL VENUE MAP



BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT

City Overview

Previously the national capital, and arguably still the cultural capital of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro is the country's second-largest city, with approximately 6.4 million inhabitants in the municipality proper and just over 12 million in the greater metropolitan area. The city is particularly noted for its contrasts of world famous beaches and coastal mountains against a backdrop of sometimes staggering poverty, usually concentrated

in slum areas referred to as *favelas* – home to roughly one-fifth of the city's population. As such, opportunistic crime, including pickpocketing and mugging, is by far the greatest risk to travellers and locals alike during the Olympic Games.

Civil unrest has also posed a concern in recent years, fuelled in large part by public frustration with widespread government corruption, economic stagnation and recent crises in government. The latest iteration of demonstrations, which largely began in late 2015 in Rio and other major cities, have attracted hundreds of thousands of people and have sometimes seen clashes between police and protesters, although the more consistent risk from protests has been that of transit disruptions.

No armed conflict threats currently face Rio, and the city, while perhaps ill-prepared for a terrorist attack, is nevertheless not viewed as being at risk for such an incident due to no notable domestic terrorist groups and Brazil's non-interventionist foreign policy. Health concerns, including the Zika virus, are notable principally for the young, elderly, those with compromised immune systems and pregnant women.

SECURITY ASSESSMENT

Criminal Activity

Brazilian authorities have repeatedly assured the general public that they have treated security concerns with the utmost seriousness, although certain risks will prove difficult – if not impossible – to fully mitigate. In terms of simple opportunistic crime, some 85,000 security force personnel, including 15,000 soldiers, will be deployed during the Games. This number is more than double that used by the UK for the 2012 London Games, though the risk of crime is also much greater in Rio.

Visitors will need to rely on heightened awareness near the city's more famous tourist attractions, which is where the majority of opportunistic crime is likely occur as

opposed to inside the actual venues themselves. The beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana, in particular, saw a sharp uptick in snatch-and-grab theft in 2015, and the night-time districts of Lapa and Centro have long been opportunistic crime hotspots, particularly for unassuming tourists. Card cloning at ATM machines can occur anywhere in the city, and travellers should enter their PIN codes with great discretion.

Authorities have widely touted their previous World Cup preparations as proof that they will be ready for the Olympic Games. By this same token, however, it is important to note that though statistics for crime during the World Cup period are not generally available, reports of individual and mass robberies as well as credit/debit card cloning are numerous and do not suggest that, if an opportunistic crime reduction did happen to occur, it was significant in any way, including in Rio.

Violent crime in the city had been decreasing for years until recent months, when rates began to plateau in Rio while they actually increased in the state at large, notably in satellite cities across Guanabara Bay from Rio such as Niteroi and Sao Goncalo. The murder rate for Rio now stands at 18.6 per 100,000 – the lowest since 1991 – and is below the national average but still well above the rate in Sao Paulo, long considered its principal counterpart. However, the bulk of these murders occur in the poorer districts and favelas, which are not visited by the typical tourist.

Slum pacification forces are expected to deploy en masse throughout the favelas during the games to prevent spillover violence and are likely to be joined by the military. Recent anecdotal reports have indicated that violence in the favelas has increased due to cutbacks in the state security budget as well as a growing mistrust among favela residents stemming from the power vacuum this has created, allowing

criminal forces to reassert their influence. There have also been longstanding questions regarding excessive use of force among security personnel that has further weakened residents' confidence in the programme.

Although certain favelas – Mare, for example – are somewhat close to venues and/or the airport, the massive deployment of embedded security forces in the favelas is likely to be successful overall. Similar efforts were undertaken in 2014 for the World Cup, and the city has now had nearly a decade of experience with its slum pacification forces.

Due to aforementioned tensions within the favelas, so-called “slum tourism” is highly discouraged during attendance at the Games. Neighbourhoods with a mixed safety reputation should also be avoided where possible. In the lead-up to the Games, at least one incident of athletes being mugged at gunpoint has already been reported in the Santa Teresa district. Sexual assaults will be a concern for female visitors, in particular, and those travelling alone should exercise particular caution in isolated areas, bars and nightclubs.

In terms of post-Olympic stays, a high degree of concern also exists for increases in violence in favelas and neighbouring areas after the Games have ended, as security forces will be drawn down and state security forces will again need to fend for themselves sans the federal resources provided during the Games.

Instability and Unrest

Perhaps the most uncertain of all the threats facing the Games is that of mass social unrest, which first began to occur in fits and spurts in the country beginning in the summer of 2013 and have continued annually. In the most recent round of

demonstrations since late 2015, protesters have gone to the streets both in favour of and against suspended President Dilma Rousseff and her Workers' Party (PT); Rousseff currently faces an impeachment trial in the Senate over budget manipulations. Senate leadership had originally intended for events to conclude before the Games' opening, but the current approved schedule places trial events in mid-August, concurrent with the Games. Such a charged political event occurring during the Games could prove disastrous in terms of engendering unrest, although major protests have been noted primarily in Brasilia and Sao Paulo and secondarily in Rio and other major cities. Demonstrations in Rio typically occur along the Ipanema and Copacabana beach avenues or in the Centro, the city's downtown core.

Public angst has grown much larger over the past two years towards the entire political establishment. Figures in all major parties have been implicated by the federal "Operation Car Wash" related to the Petrolão corruption scandal; the interim government led by Vice President Michel Temer has proved as equally unpopular as Rousseff's administration, and Temer has been particularly damaged by recordings of at least two ministers in which they suggest derailing "Car Wash"; said ministers have since resigned along with a third also accused of corruption.

Certain Olympics projects themselves are under investigation for possible fraud, and the Games have inspired apathy at best among the Brazilian populace. At a time when Brazil is facing its worst recession in decades, many are openly criticising the decision to spend public money on the Games in the wake of the excesses already seen during the World Cup; recent polls have indicated that as many as 70 per cent of Rio residents are currently unsupportive of the Games being held in the city.

Although protests died down as the World Cup began in 2014, the Olympics as a whole arguably does not capture the Brazilian imagination as does a contest devoted

exclusively to football, and the possibility for mass demonstrations at the time of the Games seems greater as both the current political crisis continues and further corruption excesses are uncovered.

Terrorism

Domestic terrorism and guerrilla movements ceased to be an issue in Brazil after the country's transition to democracy in the 1980s. Transnational terrorism has not historically been a risk, although affiliates of Hezbollah are thought to engage in illicit fundraising activities in the country's tri-border area with Argentina and Paraguay. Regardless, the country has had no notable incidents of terrorism in recent history, and the last major attack to hit the broader region was in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1994. However, authorities have taken the terrorism threat seriously and have relied on training provided by the US government to bolster their own security forces. Training exercises have been repeatedly done in and around venues, although it is unclear how well Brazil's intelligence apparatus is equipped to deal with the potential terrorist threat. The country's Director of the Department of Counterterrorism has stated that there does exist a "credible threat" to the Games by Islamist extremists, in particular by Brazilian citizens who sympathise with groups like the Islamic State (IS) and could commit lone-wolf attacks.

Brazil's efforts seem geared more towards responding to an event than towards preventing one in the first place, as it lacks the counterterrorism experience of North American, European and Middle Eastern nations. Such lack of experience is a product of the fact that the country has traditionally kept a light footprint abroad and is not generally considered an "enemy state" by transnational terrorist groups. However,

given the attendance of up to half a million tourists, many of them Western, the Games offer a legitimate target for such groups.

Public Health

Notable health risks in Rio include mosquito-borne viruses as well as communicable diseases. Much has been made of the rapid spread of the Zika virus over the past few months, but Zika is known to be the least severe of the recent trifecta commonly transmitted by mosquitoes, which also includes dengue and chikungunya. However, Zika does appear to pose a serious risk to pregnant women or women attempting to become pregnant in terms of potentially causing microcephaly in newborns, and all the aforementioned viruses are likely to result in multiple days of bedrest should an individual become symptomatic.

There has been some disagreement among public health officials as to the extent to which the Games may ultimately aid the virus' global spread to currently non-affected countries, but no major international health organisations have currently advocated postponing or cancelling the Games. As such, the best prevention measures include long, loose-sleeve clothing as well as DEET-based insect repellent.

Because of the masses of people in attendance at the Games, common contagious diseases also pose a significant risk. Most recently, Brazil has been grappling with an unusually high number of fatalities related to its latest outbreak of the H1N1 swine flu virus. Such illnesses spread respiratorily or through person-to-person contact merit caution on the part of travellers, as does swimming at the city's beaches after heavy rainfall.

A number of reports have indicated that the waters around Rio, particularly in Guanabara Bay, have tested positive for so-called "super bacteria" resistant to most

antibiotics. Health concerns are somewhat alleviated by the fact that the country's public health infrastructure - particularly in more affluent cities such as Rio - is considered modern. Regardless, an emphasis on hygiene and hand-washing will heavily mitigate the risk of communicable disease.

CONCLUSION

It is an open question as to whether Rio is "ready" to host the Olympic Games, but its security forces are generally well trained and the country has provided significant resources, notwithstanding recent budget cuts in Rio State specifically. Past major sporting events, such as the World Cup and the Pan-American Games, have gone off with relative success.

While current preparations are now largely on schedule, attention should continue to be paid to the broader political situation, which will have a direct effect on civil unrest. Other risk factors such as crime will likely remain somewhat fixed and allow for more consistent expectations, though could also increase should unrest present an enabling environment.

Ultimately, it is up to the individual traveller or their sponsoring organisation to decide what level of "risk" he or she is willing to accept in attending the Games in a city like Rio, although pregnant women and those attempting to become pregnant have been uniformly advised against attending due to Zika-related concerns. The majority of visits to the city, both during major events and apart from them, are incident-free, but such outcomes are never a guarantee. However, some basic mitigation measures will maximise travellers' chances of a successful and enjoyable visit.

MITIGATION ADVICE

- Learn basic Portuguese phrases before arriving in the city, and carry a pocket-size phrasebook or the equivalent mobile app if possible.
- Significant transit time should be factored in regardless of transportation method used, including taxi, metro or bus. However, those using mass transportation should be vigilant of possible pickpockets on-board.
- Never leave items unattended on beaches. Pay careful attention to pollution reports before swimming.
- Inquire as to the safety of neighbourhoods near wherever accommodations are booked. The hotel concierge or accommodations host will likely know best regarding the existence of any nearby favelas or other crime hotspots. Favelas, in particular, should be strictly avoided.
- Avoid isolated areas during both day and night, and exercise caution when in highly trafficked and/or popular areas due to the possibility of pickpocketing and bag-snatching.
- Female travellers, in particular, should be wary of the possibility of sexual assault and should refrain from accepting drinks from strangers, nor should they leave their own drinks unattended.
- Wear loose, long-sleeve clothing and use DEET-based insect repellent to prevent mosquito-borne viral infections. Frequent hand-washing to avoid other communicable diseases is also encouraged.
- Certain hotels may have water filtration systems, but bottled water should otherwise be used. Street food should also generally not be consumed.

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