

Working in the Middle East

A travel safety briefing for event professionals. Full report

Operational **Tactical** **Strategic**

Correct as of	20 October 2026
FCDO pages re-checked	20 October 2026, about 16:38 UK time. Every page showed "Still current at: 20 October 2026"
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Read this first. This briefing is general information for event professionals. It is not legal, insurance, medical or security advice, and it is not a threat assessment. It does not replace your employer's or the client's own risk assessment, your insurer's policy wording or current FCDO travel advice. FCDO advice can change quickly, so check the FCDO page for every country on your route before you travel and while you are away. Get your own professional advice for your circumstances.



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About this report. It expands OTAS Brief TB-001 with a country-by-country table, entry basics, checklists for each level and a contact-plan template. Section 14 lists what we could not confirm. To ask for this report in another format, use the contact details on the OTAS Insights page.



1 Executive summary

This report expands OTAS Brief TB-001 for event professionals who are asked to work in the Gulf or the wider Middle East. It gathers what official sources said on 20 October 2026 and turns it into questions, checklists and a contact plan. It is not a threat assessment. It does not rate risk for any country, venue or event. It is based only on published official sources.

What the official sources say today

- Every Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) page covered here warns of regional tensions. FCDO says the situation in the Middle East remains unpredictable, and that there have been strikes and retaliatory attacks by Iran across the region since 8 July [5].
- FCDO advises against all travel to Iran, Syria and Yemen [15][16][17]. It advises against all but essential travel to most of Saudi Arabia, and against all travel within 10km of the Yemen border [6].
- FCDO advises against travel to specified areas of Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt [11][12][13][14][18][35].
- FCDO has no advise-against areas for the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait or Oman. Each of those pages still warns of possible flight cancellations and periodic airspace closures [5][7][8][9][10].
- The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) listed active conflict zone bulletins for airspace in or near 8 parts of the region on 20 October 2026 [44].
- Travelling against FCDO advice may invalidate travel insurance [4][36]. FCDO's Exceptional Assistance Measures for victims of terrorism are not available if you travel against its advice [3].
- UK health and safety law generally stops at the edge of Great Britain. Local law applies abroad, and duties at common law and under contracts still matter [19][20][21][47].
- Heat is a serious occupational hazard in the region. FCDO says summer temperatures in Saudi Arabia may exceed 50°C, and that extreme heat has caused deaths in Oman [6][10].

The 6 things to do

- Read the FCDO page for every country on the route, sign up for alerts and set re-check points [1][2].
- Get written answers from your insurer before you book, using the questions in section 9 [4].
- Agree who decides, at each level, and the triggers to pause, end or leave (section 11).
- Get written confirmation of the visa or permit each role needs. A visit visa is not a work permit [5][7][8].
- Brief every crew member on local laws that affect them, including medicines, filming, drones and conduct (section 6).
- Plan for coming home: rest, a welfare check and a debrief (section 13).

By level

Level	Who this usually is	What this report asks of you
Operational	Crew leads and individuals carrying out the plan	Know the rules for your own documents, medicines, conduct and heat. Check in on time. Follow local authority instructions. Raise a concern and step back without penalty.
Tactical	The lead on the ground	Turn Strategic decisions into plans. Run check-ins, headcounts and heat plans. Keep exit routes, documents and the contact plan current. Watch alerts every day.
Strategic	The senior decision-maker, often at head office or the client	Decide whether the job goes ahead, continues, pauses or ends. Own decisions about leaving, insurance, budgets for early exit and the duty of care owed to people you send.

Table 1. The 3 levels used in this report. OTAS Live Ltd uses Operational, Tactical and Strategic for event operations.

2 How to use this report

Who it is for

It is for event professionals based in the UK who are asked to work in the region, and for the people who send them. That includes production, technical, staging, logistics and touring crew and freelancers. It also includes the employers and clients who engage them.

What it covers

It covers the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen and Egypt. It does not cover other countries that some people group with the region, such as Türkiye, Cyprus, Libya or Sudan.

How it was checked

- Every FCDO country page was re-checked on 20 October 2026 at about 16:38 UK time. Each page showed "Still current at: 20 October 2026", and each 'updated' date matched the date in the brief [5] to [18], [35].
- Only official sources are used: FCDO, legislation.gov.uk, HSE, Acas, NHS, WHO, TravelHealthPro (NaTHNaC), EASA, the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the UAE regulator TDRA.
- Points about foreign law are as FCDO reports them. They are not the view of OTAS Live Ltd, and they are not a full statement of local law.
- Anything we could not confirm is marked UNVERIFIED and listed in section 14.
- Reference numbers 1 to 34 match the brief. Numbers 35 to 48 are new in this report.

Words used in this report

Term	Meaning here
'all travel' and 'all but essential travel'	The 2 formal FCDO advice levels. FCDO only advises against travel if it thinks the risk to British nationals is unacceptably high. Your insurance could be invalidated if you travel against its advice [36].
'essential travel'	FCDO says you must decide whether your travel is essential, and that only you can make an informed decision [36].

Term	Meaning here
ETA	Electronic travel authorisation. A permission to travel applied for online before you go.
CZIB	Conflict Zone Information Bulletin. An EASA advisory for airspace identified as high risk, aimed at aircraft operators [44].
'delict' and 'negligence'	The law of civil wrongs. 'Delict' is the term in Scotland. 'Negligence' is the term in England and Wales. Both can give rise to a duty of care.
'duty of care'	A legal duty to take reasonable care to avoid harm to others. Acas uses the term for the duties employers have to workers [38].

UK law in this report means the law of Great Britain. It does not cover Northern Ireland. Where Scots law and the law of England and Wales differ, both are named. UK law does not override the law of the country you are working in.

3 The picture on 20 October 2026

This section summarises the regional text that appears on the FCDO pages. It is a summary of FCDO's words, not an assessment by OTAS Live Ltd.

- FCDO says the US and Iran announced a memorandum of understanding on 17 June, but that the situation in the Middle East remains unpredictable [5].
- FCDO says that since 8 July there have been strikes and retaliatory attacks by Iran in locations across the region against US military and civilian infrastructure [5].
- On the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman pages, FCDO tells British nationals to be prepared for flight cancellations, periodic airspace closures and travel disruption. It says to follow local authorities, stay away from security or military facilities, keep departure plans under review and not touch drone or missile fragments [5][7][8][9][10].
- On Saudi Arabia, FCDO says further attacks against airports, and disruption and cancellations, are very likely. It advises staying away from King Khalid International Airport, Riyadh, until it is secure, after a serious incident on 10 October 2026 [6].
- On Lebanon, FCDO says you should have a personal emergency plan which does not rely on the UK government [13].
- On Yemen, FCDO says that if you are in Yemen you should leave immediately, and that there are no evacuation procedures in place [17].
- FCDO publishes a guide to the support it can give British nationals abroad [46], and general advice on reducing your risk from terrorism while abroad [48].

Why this matters for event operations. The same text appears on pages for countries with no advise-against areas. A job in a country with no FCDO warning against travel can still be hit by flight cancellations, airspace closures and changes at short notice. Plan for that from the start.

4 Country by country: FCDO advice status

Summary only. Each row is a short version of the FCDO page. Read the full page, including the map, before you decide anything. Area names are as FCDO prints them.

Country	FCDO advice against travel	Other points FCDO makes	Updated (still current)
United Arab Emirates [5]	None.	Regional tensions text. Prepare for flight cancellations and periodic airspace closures.	24 July 2026 (20 October 2026)
Saudi Arabia [6]	All travel within 10km of the Yemen border. All but essential travel to the rest of the country.	Stay away from King Khalid International Airport until it is secure. Further airport attacks and disruption are very likely. Consider leaving by land and flying from a neighbouring country. Do not capture or share images of conflict-related incidents.	17 October 2026 (20 October 2026)
Qatar [7]	None.	Regional tensions text. Prepare for flight cancellations and periodic airspace closures.	19 August 2026 (20 October 2026)
Bahrain [8]	None.	Regional tensions text. FCDO notes that in April 2026 airspace and the King Fahd Causeway to Saudi Arabia closed at the same time.	8 October 2026 (20 October 2026)
Kuwait [9]	None. FCDO no longer advises against all but essential travel (change of 20 August 2026).	Kuwait International Airport is operating through Terminals 4 and 5. Terminal 1 remains closed.	20 August 2026 (20 October 2026)
Oman [10]	None.	Regional tensions text. Extreme heat has caused deaths in Oman.	22 July 2026 (20 October 2026)
Jordan [11]	All travel within 3km of the border with Syria.	In early September renewed attacks and interceptions occurred in and around Aqaba.	10 September 2026 (20 October 2026)
Israel [12]	All travel to Gaza, within 500m of the Gaza border, specified northern areas and Golan Heights areas, and 'Sheba'a Farms and Ghajja'. All but essential travel to the rest of the West Bank, with exceptions.	If advised to shelter, follow Israel's Home Front Command guidance on finding a protected space.	22 July 2026 (20 October 2026)
Palestine [35]	The same areas as the Israel page, including Gaza and the specified West Bank governorates. All but essential travel to the rest of the West Bank, with exceptions.	FCDO now publishes this advice at a page called 'Palestine travel advice'.	22 July 2026 (20 October 2026)
Lebanon [13]	All travel to specified areas, including the South and Nabatiyeh Governorates, specified southern suburbs of Beirut and the 12 Palestinian refugee camps. All but essential travel to further areas.	Conflict escalated from 2 March. Consular support is severely limited where FCDO advises against travel. Have a personal emergency plan that does not rely on the UK government.	10 August 2026 (20 October 2026)

Country	FCDO advice against travel	Other points FCDO makes	Updated (still current)
Iraq [14]	All travel to several provinces and border areas. All but essential travel to the rest of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region.	Consular support is severely limited in areas where FCDO advises against travel. Sand and dust storms are common in spring and summer.	22 July 2026 (20 October 2026)
Iran [15]	All travel to the whole country.	British and British-Iranian dual nationals are at significant risk of arrest, questioning or detention. Ongoing disruption to communications.	13 August 2026 (20 October 2026)
Syria [16]	All travel to the whole country.	Consular support is not available from the British government from within Syria.	2 September 2026 (20 October 2026)
Yemen [17]	All travel to the whole country.	If you are in Yemen, leave immediately. British Embassy services in Sana'a are suspended. No evacuation procedures are in place.	31 July 2026 (20 October 2026)
Egypt [18]	All travel within 20km of the Libyan border and to North Sinai. All but essential travel to specified other areas, including parts of South Sinai, the Western Desert, the Hala'ib Triangle and the Bir Tawil Trapezoid.	The Rafah crossing from Gaza is closed. The Taba crossing with Israel could close at short notice. On 29 July an apparent drone strike damaged 2 ships off Damietta.	4 August 2026 (20 October 2026)

Table 2. FCDO advice status, re-checked 20 October 2026 at about 16:38 UK time. 'Updated' is the GOV.UK last-updated date. 'Still current' is the date GOV.UK showed on the day of the check. This table does not rate risk.

5 Entry and visa basics

FCDO entry pages are written for people travelling on a full 'British citizen' passport [5]. Crew with other passports need their own government's advice and the relevant embassy. Visa rules change. Confirm the visa or permit for each role with the official issuing authority or embassy, in writing, before you travel.

Country	Passport validity (FCDO)	Visit entry for British citizens (FCDO)	Work and other points (FCDO)
United Arab Emirates [5]	6 months from arrival	Free visit visa on arrival, valid for 90 days in any 180	Working on a visit visa can lead to a fine or prison and deportation. To work after entering Dubai on a visit visa, you need a probationary work permit. An employer holding your passport is illegal under UAE labour law.
Saudi Arabia [6]	6 months	A visa is needed. FCDO describes an electronic travel authorisation and a tourist e-visa	You may be refused entry if your passport shows travel to Israel or birth there. Overstaying can bring fines, detention and deportation. Whether event work fits a given visa type is UNVERIFIED.
Qatar [7]	6 months	Visa on arrival for tourism	Any other purpose needs a visa in advance. Stays over 30 days need an extension through the Qatar Ministry of Interior.

Country	Passport validity (FCDO)	Visit entry for British citizens (FCDO)	Work and other points (FCDO)
Bahrain [8]	6 months	Visa needed, online, from an embassy or on arrival	You cannot start employment on a visit visa. Travel bans can apply to people involved in disputes or debts.
Kuwait [9]	6 months	Visa on arrival or online. Show a return ticket and accommodation	Work visas need employer documents. Employers should not keep your passport.
Oman [10]	6 months	Up to 14 days without a visa. Show a ticket, accommodation and travel health insurance	Longer stays or work need a visa. Overstay fines apply.
Jordan [11]	6 months	Visa on arrival for tourism	Work needs a visa in advance. Stays over 14 days need police registration, with exceptions.
Israel [12]	90 days	An ETA is needed before travel	Working without permission can lead to detention and deportation. Devices and social media may be searched.
Palestine [35]	90 days	FCDO says the Israeli authorities control entry to Palestine	FCDO advises against travel to parts of Palestine. Read the full page.
Lebanon [13]	3 months	Free tourist visa on arrival at Beirut airport	An Israeli stamp may lead to refusal of entry.
Iraq [14]	6 months and 1 blank page	e-visa applied for before travel. The Kurdistan Region has its own system	Some visa types need blood tests for HIV and hepatitis.
Iran [15]	6 months	FCDO advises against all travel. Entry needs an organised tour or a sponsor	Drones and satellite phones need permission.
Syria [16]	3 months	FCDO advises against all travel	No consular support within Syria.
Yemen [17]	6 months	FCDO advises against all travel	Embassy services suspended.
Egypt [18]	6 months and 1 blank page	A visa is normally needed, by e-visa or on arrival	A permit is needed to bring professional photography or filming equipment.

Table 3. Entry basics as FCDO reports them on 20 October 2026, for full 'British citizen' passport holders. Fees and stay lengths change. Confirm with the official issuing authority before you book.

A visit visa is not a work permit. Several FCDO pages say working on a visit visa is not allowed or can lead to fines, detention or deportation [5][8][12]. Get written confirmation from the client or employer of the visa or permit each role needs, and check it against the official source.

6 Local law and conduct for touring crew

Rules vary by country, and sometimes within one country. The points below are as FCDO reports them. They are a starting list, not a full statement of local law.

Alcohol

- UAE and Qatar: drinking or being drunk in public is illegal, and alcohol is banned entirely in Sharjah [5][7].



- Saudi Arabia: do not bring alcohol in or arrive under its influence. Possession can bring severe penalties, including prison [6].
- Kuwait: importing alcohol is illegal [9]. Bahrain: alcohol is legal, but drunken behaviour in public is illegal [8].

Medicines

- Some UK prescription and over-the-counter medicines are controlled in the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia [5][6][7].
- The UAE requires approval for controlled medicines [5]. Qatar requires a recent prescription and medical report and has an online permit system [7].
- Kuwait: FCDO says all visitors must get permission from the Kuwaiti authorities before arrival to carry certain prescription drugs, and that this applies to many commonly prescribed medicines [9].
- Saudi Arabia: carry an official prescription, hospital note or GP letter [6].
- Carry medicines in original packaging with the prescription or a letter, and check the rules for each country, including transit [26].

Dress and behaviour

- Qatar: men and women should cover shoulders and knees [7]. Saudi Arabia: FCDO says men and women must wear loose-fitting clothing covering the elbows and below the knees [6].
- Swearing and rude gestures, including online and while driving, are treated as offences in the UAE and Qatar [5][7]. Obscene gestures and insults are illegal in Kuwait [9].
- Saudi Arabia: avoid public affection, swearing, loud music and critical political statements [6].

Photography, filming, media and drones

- Do not photograph people without consent, or government, military or diplomatic sites [5][6][7]. In Qatar, sharing images of people without consent can lead to prison or a fine of up to 100,000 Qatari riyals [7].
- Saudi Arabia: if you produce, transmit or distribute printed, digital, audio or video information, FCDO says you must get permission from the General Authority of Media Regulation (GCAM) in advance [6].
- Egypt: a permit is needed to bring in professional photography or filming equipment [18].
- Drones need licences or permission in Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Iran, and flying drone cameras without permission is illegal in Lebanon [7][8][10][13][15].
- Bahrain: filming security incidents is prohibited [8]. Saudi Arabia: do not capture or share images of conflict-related incidents [6].

For content capture and social media teams. Assume every country needs a permit for filming, drones and professional equipment until the official authority confirms otherwise in writing. Build this into the content plan and the kit list.

Calling apps and communications

- UAE: TDRA says internet voice and video calls are a regulated activity, and lists approved apps [24]. Which apps are on the list today is UNVERIFIED.
- Iran: FCDO reports ongoing disruption to communications and limits on internet access [15].
- Agree a fallback contact method before you travel (section 12).



LGBT+ legal risks

- FCDO reports that same-sex sexual activity is illegal in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Iran and Yemen [5][6][7][9][10][14][15][17].
- Read FCDO's LGBT+ travel advice and the local laws section for each country [25].
- Employers should factor this into planning while fully respecting each person's privacy. Nobody should have to disclose their sexuality or gender identity to be kept safe.

Ramadan and working hours

- During Ramadan, eating, drinking or smoking in public in daytime, loud music and dancing may cause offence, and opening hours change [5].
- Ramadan dates vary by year and country [6]. The dates for 2027 were not checked for this report (UNVERIFIED).
- Plan catering, sound checks, load-in and crew ingress and egress around it.

Passports and travel bans

- Keep your own passport. Holding a worker's passport is illegal under UAE labour law [5], and FCDO also says so for Saudi Arabia [6]. Kuwait employers should not keep your passport [9].
- Bahrain can impose travel bans on people involved in disputes or debts [8]. Settle bills and contract disputes before you try to leave.

7 Heat and climate

Heat is a health hazard for anyone doing physical work outdoors, under stage lighting or in poorly ventilated structures.

- WHO says heat is an important environmental and occupational health hazard, heat stress is a leading cause of weather-related deaths and heatstroke is a medical emergency [30].
- FCDO says summer temperatures in Saudi Arabia may exceed 50°C [6], and that extreme heat has caused deaths in Oman [10].
- FCDO notes that sand and dust storms are common in Iraq in spring and summer [14].

Plan the work

- Assess heat as a risk, like any other hazard. HSE sets out how to assess and reduce heat stress [27][37].
- Move heavy work to cooler times and give more frequent breaks in shaded or cool rest areas [27][28].
- Let people acclimatise. Identify who is more at risk, for example because of medicines or a health condition [27]. Do not give new arrivals the heaviest shifts.
- Provide cool water and encourage small, frequent drinks [27]. Avoid drinking too much alcohol [43].
- Keep out of the sun at the hottest part of the day, typically between 11:00 and 15:00, and avoid strenuous activity where possible [43].
- Those with health conditions can ask their doctor about managing their health in the heat, ideally 4 to 6 weeks before travel [43].

Know the signs

Condition	Signs (NHS)	What to do (NHS)
Heat exhaustion	Tiredness, dizziness, headache, feeling or being sick, heavy sweating, cramps, a high temperature and being very thirsty	Move them to a cool place, remove unnecessary clothing, give plenty of water and cool their skin. Stay with them. If they are still unwell after 30 minutes of resting and cooling, treat it as heatstroke [29].
Heatstroke	A very high temperature, hot skin without sweating, fast breathing and a fast heartbeat, confusion, a fit or loss of consciousness	It is a medical emergency. Get immediate medical help using the local emergency number [29].

Table 4. Heat illness. Learn the local emergency number from the FCDO page for each country [3].

8 Airspace and flight disruption

- FCDO pages across the region tell British nationals to be prepared for possible flight cancellations, periodic airspace closures and travel disruption [5][7][8][9][10][15].
- FCDO says further attacks against airports in Saudi Arabia, and disruption and cancellations, are very likely [6]. It notes a simultaneous closure of airspace and the King Fahd Causeway in Bahrain in April 2026 [8].
- Kuwait International Airport is operating through Terminals 4 and 5, with Terminal 1 closed [9].

What EASA publishes

EASA publishes Conflict Zone Information Bulletins (CZIBs) for airspace identified as high risk. They are aimed at aircraft operators, not passengers [44]. On 20 October 2026, EASA listed active bulletins covering Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Yemen (Sana'a flight information region) and Syria [44]. A bulletin does not mean flights stop. It does mean airlines may reroute, delay or cancel at short notice.

Planning for disruption

- Use flexible tickets where you can, and budget for extra nights.
- Plan at least 2 ways out, including a land route where FCDO suggests one [6]. Check the entry rules of the neighbouring country before you need them.
- If you leave Saudi Arabia by car, FCDO says the vehicle must be wholly owned and registered in your name [6].
- Ask your airline about your options. The CAA explains passenger rights for delays and cancellations [45]. The CAA page could not be read in full for this report, so how those rights apply to a given airline and route is UNVERIFIED.
- Remember the transit country. Qatar says travellers cannot stay in the transit area for more than 24 hours between flights [7].

9 Insurance questions to ask

These are questions to put to an insurer or broker. They are not advice about which cover to buy. Get the answers in writing.



FCDO says travel insurance should cover the full trip, every place you visit including transit, emergency medical treatment and emergency transport and repatriation. It should also cover pre-existing physical and mental health conditions [4]. It says to check cover for work, paid or unpaid, and that travelling against FCDO advice may invalidate cover [4].

- Does the policy cover every country on the route, including transit countries, for the full trip?
- Does it cover the work I will do, paid or unpaid, including physical work at height, rigging or load-in?
- What happens to my cover if FCDO advice changes after I book, before I travel?
- What happens if FCDO advice changes while I am there? How long do I have to leave, and who pays?
- Am I covered in an area where FCDO advises against all but essential travel? If so, what conditions apply?
- What does the policy exclude for terrorism, war, civil unrest and strikes? FCDO says most travel insurers offer only limited cover for terrorism [4].
- Does it cover emergency medical treatment, emergency transport and repatriation from each country?
- Does it cover my pre-existing physical and mental health conditions, and have I declared them?
- Is there a 24-hour assistance line, and does it help with leaving a country in a crisis?
- Who holds the policy: me, my employer or the client? Does the employer's policy cover freelancers?
- Does it cover kit, cash and documents, and what limits apply?
- Who do I call first if something happens, and what evidence will the insurer need?

Exceptional Assistance Measures. FCDO's support for victims of terrorism abroad is not available to people who travel against FCDO advice [3]. That is a further reason to know where your work sits against FCDO advice.

10 Employer duty of care for staff sent abroad

This section explains the UK position in general terms. It is not legal advice. How the law applies to a particular job depends on the facts and is a question for a solicitor.

UK health and safety law and its reach

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 generally applies in Great Britain. It reaches outside Great Britain only where an Order extends it [19].
- The current Order covers specified offshore energy and pipeline activities and certain work in UK territorial waters [20]. It does not cover ordinary overseas work such as event operations.
- HSE says it does not investigate incidents outside Great Britain, and that risks arising abroad may be subject to the law of the country concerned. That guidance was written for the armed forces [21].
- Inside Great Britain, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to identify hazards, decide how likely harm is and how serious, and act to remove or control the risk [37]. Planning in the UK for a trip abroad is work done in Great Britain.

Duty of care beyond the statute

- Acas says employers have a 'duty of care' for workers [38]. In Scotland, a duty of care at common law arises under the law of delict. In England and Wales it arises under the law of negligence. Either can extend to staff an employer sends abroad [47].
- Local law applies in the country where you work. UK standards do not override it.



- What a client or engager owes a freelancer depends largely on the contract terms [47].
- Employment status affects rights and responsibilities. Acas describes 3 main types: employee, worker and self-employed [40]. Where agency workers are used, Acas says both the agency and the hirer have health and safety responsibilities [38].
- Working time and rest rules under the Working Time Regulations 1998 apply in Great Britain [41]. Whether any local rules apply abroad is UNVERIFIED for this report.

Contracts and getting paid

Get these in writing before anyone travels. They protect freelancers and employers alike.

- Scope, dates, rates and cancellation, including what happens if security or travel disruption cuts the job short.
- Payment schedule and currency: deposit, stages, final date and who pays bank and exchange charges.
- Who pays for an early exit. FCDO says you should not expect the UK government to evacuate you, and that you may be charged for charter flights it arranges [3].
- Passports. Keep your own. Holding a worker's passport is illegal under UAE labour law, and FCDO says the same for Saudi Arabia [5][6].
- The visa or permit each role needs (section 5).
- Governing law and disputes. UK statutory late-payment interest applies only in limited cases where UK law governs the contract [34]. Take advice before relying on it.

Practical steps that follow from the guidance

- A written, destination-specific risk assessment, including heat, travel disruption and leaving at short notice [37].
- HSE's lone working principles transfer well: assess the risks, train and supervise, keep in touch at agreed intervals and test the system [22][23]. HSE says that when a lone worker will be at someone else's workplace, their employer must ask that employer about any risks and control measures [22].
- FCDO says anyone working abroad should know their employer's evacuation and contingency plans, and make sure the employer has their next-of-kin details [3].
- Acas says employers should take poor mental health as seriously as physical illness [39]. Plan support for people during and after the trip.
- Fatigue needs to be managed, like any other hazard [31]. Long travel days, time zones and heat all add to it.

Limits of this section. An internal wording check by OTAS Live Ltd reviewed this section for accuracy against the sources. It has not been reviewed by a solicitor [47]. Anything more specific, such as who is liable for a particular person on a particular job, needs a solicitor.



11 Checklists by phase and level

Each phase lists the Operational, Tactical and Strategic actions. Adapt them to the job. Tick each item only when it is done and recorded.

Pre-departure

Operational

- ☐ Passport valid for the period FCDO states for each country, with blank pages where needed [5] to [18]
- ☐ Visa or permit for your role confirmed in writing
- ☐ Medicines in original packaging, with prescription or letter and any permits [26]
- ☐ Insurance details and 24-hour assistance line saved and shared with someone at home [4]
- ☐ Signed up to FCDO email alerts for every country on the route [2]
- ☐ Contact plan (section 12) completed and shared
- ☐ Local laws section read for each country, including transit
- ☐ Phone that works with a local SIM or eSIM, chargers and a power bank
- ☐ Clothing suitable for local dress rules and heat

Tactical

- ☐ Contact plan and check-in schedule agreed for every crew member
- ☐ Crew briefing on local laws, conduct, medicines, filming and drones
- ☐ Heat plan: work-rest times, water, shade and acclimatisation [27][28]
- ☐ At least 2 exit routes mapped, including land routes and onward entry rules
- ☐ Shelter points known at hotel and venue [3]
- ☐ Copies of documents held securely, with consent
- ☐ Re-check points set: when you book, 72 hours before departure and on the day you travel [1]
- ☐ Permits for filming, drones and professional equipment confirmed in writing

Strategic

- ☐ Decision on whether the job goes ahead, recorded with reasons, after reading FCDO advice for every country on the route [1]
- ☐ If any part is in an all but essential travel area, the reason the travel is essential recorded [36]
- ☐ Insurance confirmed in writing for every person, including freelancers [4]
- ☐ Written, destination-specific risk assessment and evacuation plan approved [3][37]
- ☐ Role holders and deputies named at each level, with what each level can decide alone
- ☐ Triggers to pause, end or leave agreed in writing
- ☐ Written terms agreed: scope, payment, cancellation, early-exit costs, passports, visas
- ☐ Budget agreed for flexible tickets, extra nights and early exit



On the ground

Operational

- ☐ Check in at the agreed times by the agreed method
- ☐ Drink water little and often, and watch colleagues for signs of heat illness [29]
- ☐ Follow dress, conduct and photography rules
- ☐ Do not capture or share images of conflict-related incidents where FCDO says so [6]
- ☐ Do not approach or touch drone or missile fragments [5]
- ☐ Know the muster point, the alternative and the shelter point
- ☐ Raise any concern with the Tactical lead without delay

Tactical

- ☐ Re-check FCDO pages every day and when an alert arrives
- ☐ Daily brief: heat, airport and airspace news, local authority instructions
- ☐ Act at once on a missed check-in, as agreed in the plan [23]
- ☐ Headcount list kept current, with the headcount owner named
- ☐ Access control and credentials checked, with a route to report someone who should not be there
- ☐ Crew ingress and egress at the venue planned and briefed
- ☐ Schedules adjusted for heat, fatigue and Ramadan [27][31]

Strategic

- ☐ Daily review with the Tactical lead at an agreed time
- ☐ Decision-maker reachable at all hours, with a deputy
- ☐ Triggers reviewed against FCDO changes and insurer answers
- ☐ Client kept informed through one agreed route

When things change

Operational

- ☐ Follow instructions from local authorities [5]
- ☐ If told to shelter, go to an interior stairwell or a room with as few external walls or windows as possible [3]
- ☐ Grab bag ready: medicines, water, food, first aid kit, torch and batteries [3]
- ☐ Phone charged. Tell family you are safe through the agreed route
- ☐ Avoid crowds and demonstrations [3]

**Tactical**

- ☐ Put the agreed plan into action: moving people, changing schedules, liaising with the venue
- ☐ Headcount confirmed and reported to the Strategic lead
- ☐ Insurer's assistance line contacted early
- ☐ Transport and onward entry rules confirmed before people move
- ☐ Documents, cash and kit secured, with people put first

Strategic

- ☐ Decide whether the job continues, pauses or ends, and record the reasons
- ☐ Authorise spending on early exit, without waiting for the client
- ☐ Remember FCDO says not to expect the UK government to evacuate you, and that charter flights may be charged [3]
- ☐ Agree who speaks to next of kin, the client and crew. Agree what they say

Coming home**Operational**

- ☐ Rest before the next job. Avoid driving home tired after a long-haul flight [31]
- ☐ Watch for signs of stress, which can appear weeks later [32]
- ☐ See your GP or healthcare provider if you have ongoing health concerns [43]
- ☐ Know where to get urgent mental health help [33]

Tactical

- ☐ Debrief held within a few days of return, and lessons recorded
- ☐ Welfare check made with every crew member
- ☐ Kit, documents and expenses returned or settled

Strategic

- ☐ Rest days funded, and pay made on time
- ☐ Risk assessment, plan and triggers reviewed with the lessons from the trip
- ☐ Support offered to anyone affected, without pressure [39]

12 Personal contact-plan template

Fill this in for each person before travel. Share it only with the people who need it, and store it securely. Leave no field blank: write 'not applicable' where needed.

Field	Entry
Name	
Role and level (Operational, Tactical or Strategic)	
Employer or engager	
Trip dates and full route, including transit	
Accommodation address for each stop	
Venue or site contact (role and name)	
Daily check-in times (24-hour clock) and method	
Who I check in with (name and role)	
Backup contact method if the first fails	
What happens after a missed check-in, and after how long	
Next of kin (name, relationship and how to reach them)	
Insurer, policy number and 24-hour assistance line	
Local emergency number (from the FCDO page)	
Nearest British embassy or consulate (from the FCDO page)	
Medicines carried, and paperwork held	
Where copies of my passport and visa are kept	
Exit route 1 and exit route 2	
Meeting point if communications fail	
Health information I choose to share	

Table 5. Contact-plan template. Add the details for every country on the route. Personal data in this plan is for the trip only.

13 Mental health on return

A disrupted or tense job can affect people after they are home, even if nothing happened to them directly.

- HSE lists signs of stress, including mood swings, being withdrawn, loss of motivation, commitment and confidence. It also lists being more emotional, sensitive or aggressive [32]. They can appear weeks later.
- Fatigue slows reactions, causes memory lapses and leads people to underestimate risk [31]. Rest before the next job.
- Acas says employers should take poor mental health as seriously as physical illness [39].
- FCDO's mental health guidance says to stay in regular contact with people who normally support you, and points to NaTHNaC advice before, during and after travel [42].
- Talk to your manager, a colleague or your GP [32]. The NHS lists where to get urgent help for mental health [33].
- After a crisis abroad, FCDO points to the British Red Cross and other support for people affected [3].

For managers. Make the welfare check personal and private. Ask open questions, listen and offer time off. Do not ask people to relive events in a group debrief if they do not want to.

14 What we don't know

These points could not be confirmed from official sources for this report. Treat them as UNVERIFIED and check them for your own job.

Point	Status and what to do
Which visa or permit paid event work needs in each country	UNVERIFIED. FCDO gives basics only. Ask the client or employer and confirm with the official issuing authority.
Whether a Saudi electronic travel authorisation or business visa covers paid event work	UNVERIFIED. FCDO does not say. Confirm with the official Saudi authority.
Which calling apps are on TDRA's approved list today	UNVERIFIED. The list was not opened for this report [24].
How each insurer treats a change in FCDO advice	UNVERIFIED. Policies differ. Use the questions in section 9.
When or how FCDO advice will change	Not knowable in advance. Re-check every day and when an alert arrives.
The status of flights, airports and land crossings on your travel day	Changes at short notice. Check with the airline, the airport and the FCDO page.
Passenger rights for a given airline and route	UNVERIFIED. The CAA page could not be read in full for this report [45].
Ramadan dates for 2027	UNVERIFIED. Not checked for this report.
Rules for crew without a British citizen passport	Not covered. FCDO entry advice is for full British citizen passport holders.
Local health and safety, labour and event permit law	Not covered beyond the FCDO summaries. Ask the client and local authorities.



Point	Status and what to do
Who is legally responsible for a particular person on a particular job	Needs a solicitor. Not covered by the internal wording check [47].
Countries outside the scope, such as Türkiye, Cyprus, Libya or Sudan	Not covered. Read the FCDO page for each.
Incident figures for event operations in the region	Not used. This report contains no incident statistics and does not rate risk.

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16 Disclaimer

Read this first. This briefing is general information for event professionals. It is not legal, insurance, medical or security advice, and it is not a threat assessment. It does not replace your employer's or the client's own risk assessment, your insurer's policy wording or current FCDO travel advice. FCDO advice can change quickly, so check the FCDO page for every country on your route before you travel and while you are away. Get your own professional advice for your circumstances.

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