



Working in the Middle East

Travel safety for event professionals

OTAS Brief TB-001: before you go, on the ground, when things change and coming home

Operational · Tactical · Strategic | Correct as of 20 October 2026





OTAS Brief TB-001

General information, not advice

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.

Correct as of 20 October 2026. Check the live FCDO page for every country on your route at gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice before you travel and while you are away.



The short version: what to sort before anyone travels

What FCDO says

Regional warnings

- Every FCDO page here warns of regional tensions
- Against all travel to Iran, Syria and Yemen
- Against travel to specified areas of Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt
- No advise-against areas for the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait or Oman, but flights can be disrupted

Get it in writing

Route, insurance, visa

- Read the FCDO page for every country on the route and sign up for alerts
- Get your insurer's answers in writing before you book
- Confirm the visa or permit each role needs. A visit visa is not a work permit

Agree who decides

Decisions and triggers

- Agree who decides at each level: Operational, Tactical, Strategic
- Agree the triggers to pause, end or leave
- Brief every crew member on local laws: medicines, filming, drones, conduct
- Plan for coming home: rest, a welfare check and a debrief

Travelling against FCDO advice may invalidate travel insurance. This briefing does not rate risk for any country, venue or event.

How to read FCDO advice: 2 formal levels

2

formal FCDO advice levels: 'all travel' and 'all but essential travel'

When FCDO advises against travel. Only if it thinks the risk to British nationals is unacceptably high.

Essential travel. FCDO says you must decide whether your travel is essential; only you can make an informed decision.

Insurance. Travelling against FCDO advice may invalidate your cover. How each insurer treats a change in advice is unverified: get the answer in writing.

If you travel against FCDO advice, FCDO's Exceptional Assistance Measures for victims of terrorism abroad are not available.

Country by country: what FCDO advises (1 of 2)

Country (FCDO page)	FCDO advises against	Other points FCDO makes
United Arab Emirates Updated 24 July 2026	None.	Regional tensions text. Prepare for flight cancellations and periodic airspace closures.
Saudi Arabia Updated 17 October 2026	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. Consider leaving by land and flying from a neighbouring country.
Qatar Updated 19 August 2026	None.	Regional tensions text. Prepare for flight cancellations and periodic airspace closures.
Bahrain Updated 8 October 2026	None.	Regional tensions text. In April 2026 airspace and the King Fahd Causeway to Saudi Arabia closed at the same time.
Kuwait Updated 20 August 2026	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.
Oman Updated 22 July 2026	None.	Regional tensions text. Extreme heat has caused deaths in Oman.
Jordan Updated 10 September 2026	All travel within 3km of the border with Syria.	In early September renewed attacks and interceptions occurred in and around Aqaba.
Israel Updated 22 July 2026	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.

Summary only: read the full FCDO page and map. Dates are GOV.UK 'updated' dates; all still current on 20 October 2026. No risk rating.

Country by country: what FCDO advises (2 of 2)

Country (FCDO page)	FCDO advises against	Other points FCDO makes
Palestine Updated 22 July 2026	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'.
Lebanon Updated 10 August 2026	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.	Consular support is severely limited where FCDO advises against travel. Have a personal emergency plan that does not rely on the UK government.
Iraq Updated 22 July 2026	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.
Iran Updated 13 August 2026	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.
Syria Updated 2 September 2026	All travel to the whole country.	Consular support is not available from the British government from within Syria.
Yemen Updated 31 July 2026	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.
Egypt Updated 4 August 2026	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 and the Western Desert.	The Rafah crossing from Gaza is closed. The Taba crossing with Israel could close at short notice.

Summary only: read the full FCDO page and map. Dates are GOV.UK 'updated' dates; all still current on 20 October 2026. No risk rating.

Before you accept the job: get the answers in writing

- **Where exactly is the work?** Read the FCDO page for every country you will enter or transit: entry requirements, safety, local laws and health.
- **Is the travel essential?** If any part is in an all but essential travel area, record why the travel is essential.
- **Does the insurance cover it?** Written confirmation for every person, including freelancers: every country, the work and what happens if FCDO advice changes.
- **Which visa or permit does each role need?** A visit visa is not a work permit. Get it confirmed in writing and check it against the official source.
- **What do the written terms say?** Scope, payment, cancellation, early-exit costs, passports and visas. FCDO says not to expect the UK government to evacuate you.

Strategic sign-off

Decide whether the job goes ahead, and record the reasons.

Agreed in writing

- Insurance for every person
- Risk assessment and evacuation plan
- Role holders and deputies at each level
- Triggers to pause, end or leave
- Budget for flexible tickets, extra nights and early exit

Anyone can raise a concern and step back without penalty.

Before you travel: 6 things to sort for every crew member

01 • Documents

Passport valid long enough

Most FCDO pages: 6 months. Israel and Palestine: 90 days. Lebanon and Syria: 3 months. Iraq and Egypt: also 1 blank page.
Check the FCDO entry page for each country

02 • Visa or permit

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.
Get each role's permit confirmed in writing

03 • Insurance

Cover for the work and the route

Every work and transit country, the full trip, medical treatment, emergency transport and repatriation. A holiday policy may not cover work.
Save and share the 24-hour assistance line

04 • Phone and apps

Stay reachable

Unlocked phone with a local SIM or eSIM, chargers and a power bank. In the UAE, calling apps are regulated and TDRA lists approved apps.
Agree a fallback contact method

05 • Medicines

Check before you pack

Some UK prescription and over-the-counter medicines are controlled in the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Kuwait needs permission before arrival for certain medicines.
Original packaging, with prescription or letter

06 • Heat and health

Plan for the heat

FCDO says summer temperatures in Saudi Arabia may exceed 50°C. Ask your doctor about the heat, ideally 4 to 6 weeks before travel.
Pack clothing for local dress rules and heat

Entry rules are as FCDO reports them for full 'British citizen' passports. Crew with other passports need their own government's advice.

On the ground: local law and conduct, as FCDO reports it

- **Alcohol** Drinking or being drunk in public is illegal in the UAE and Qatar; banned in Sharjah. Do not bring alcohol into Saudi Arabia.
- **Dress and behaviour** Cover shoulders and knees in Qatar, elbows and below the knees in Saudi Arabia. Swearing and rude gestures are offences in the UAE and Qatar.
- **Ramadan** Eating, drinking or smoking in public in daytime, loud music and dancing may cause offence. Plan catering, sound checks and load-in around it.
- **Filming and drones** No photos of people without consent, or of official sites. Assume you need a permit for filming, drones and pro kit until confirmed in writing.
- **LGBT+ legal risks** FCDO reports same-sex sexual activity is illegal in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Iran and Yemen. Respect everyone's privacy.
- **Passports** Keep your own. Holding a worker's passport is illegal under UAE labour law, and FCDO says the same for Saudi Arabia.

Every day on site

Check in at the agreed times, by the agreed method

Re-check FCDO pages every day and when an alert arrives

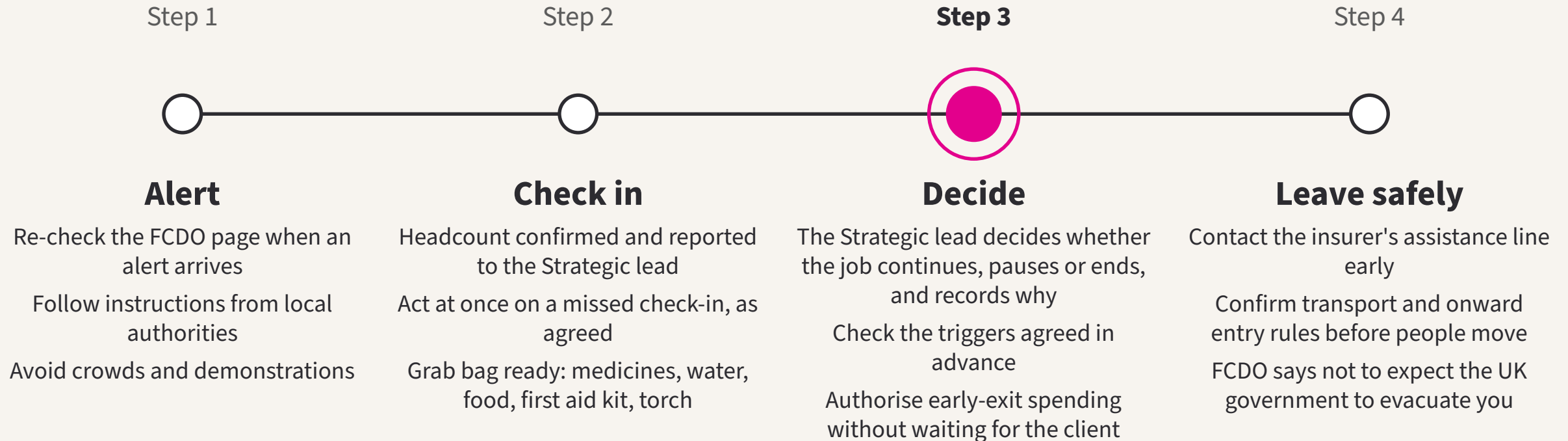
Follow local authority instructions; stay away from security or military facilities

Know the muster point, the alternative and the shelter point

Unusual objects

Don't approach or touch drone or missile fragments.

If things change: alert, check in, decide, leave



Triggers to leave, agreed in advance: FCDO advises against travel there or tells British nationals to leave; cover no longer applies; authorities say shelter or avoid the area; widespread flight cancellations; the Strategic lead judges the risk unacceptable.

Actions: Operational, for crew leads and individuals

01 • Before you go

Documents and medicines

Passport valid for each country. Visa or permit for your role confirmed in writing. Medicines in original packaging, with paperwork.

Read the local laws section for each country

02 • Before you go

Stay reachable

FCDO email alerts for every country on the route. Contact plan completed and shared. Insurance assistance line saved.

A phone that works with a local SIM or eSIM

03 • On the ground

Check in, follow the rules

Check in at the agreed times, by the agreed method. Follow dress, conduct and photography rules.

Do not touch drone or missile fragments

04 • On the ground

Heat and muster points

Drink water little and often, and watch colleagues for signs of heat illness. Know the muster point, the alternative and the shelter point.

Raise any concern with the Tactical lead

05 • When things change

Follow, shelter, tell

Follow local authority instructions. Grab bag ready. Phone charged; tell family you are safe through the agreed route.

Avoid crowds and demonstrations

06 • Coming home

Rest and recover

Rest before the next job, and avoid driving home tired after a long-haul flight. Signs of stress can appear weeks later.

See your GP if health concerns continue

Operational: the crew leads and individuals carrying out the plan. You can raise a concern and step back without penalty.

Actions: Tactical, for the lead on the ground

Before you go

Plan and brief

- Contact plan and check-in schedule for every crew member
- Crew briefed on local laws, conduct, medicines, filming and drones
- Heat plan: work-rest times, water, shade, acclimatisation
- At least 2 exit routes mapped, with onward entry rules

On the ground

Watch and adjust

- Re-check FCDO pages every day and when an alert arrives
- Act at once on a missed check-in
- Headcount list kept current, with an owner named
- Schedules adjusted for heat, fatigue and Ramadan

If things change

Put the plan into action

- Move people, change schedules, liaise 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

Coming home: debrief within a few days of return and make a welfare check with every crew member. Settle kit, documents and expenses.

Actions: Strategic, for the senior decision-maker

01 • Before you go

Decide and record

Decide whether the job goes ahead, with reasons, after reading FCDO advice for every country. Record why any travel is essential.

Risk assessment and evacuation plan approved

02 • Before you go

Insure and contract

Insurance confirmed in writing for every person, including freelancers. Written terms, including early-exit costs, passports and visas.

Budget for flexible tickets, extra nights, early exit

03 • Before you go

Name roles and triggers

Role holders and deputies named at each level, with what each can decide alone. Triggers to pause, end or leave agreed in writing.

Anyone can step back without penalty

04 • On the ground

Stay reachable

Daily review with the Tactical lead at an agreed time. Decision-maker reachable at all hours, with a deputy.

Client kept informed through one agreed route

05 • When things change

Decide and fund

Decide whether the job continues, pauses or ends, and record why. Authorise early-exit spending without waiting for the client.

Agree what is said to next of kin, client and crew

06 • Coming home

Look after people

Rest days funded and pay made on time. Support offered to anyone affected, without pressure.

Review the risk assessment, plan and triggers

Strategic: often at head office or the client. Owns decisions about leaving, insurance, early-exit budgets and the duty of care owed to people sent.

What we haven't verified: check these for your job

Point	Status	What to do
Which visa or permit paid event work needs in each country	UNVERIFIED	Ask the client or employer; confirm with the official issuing authority
Whether a Saudi electronic travel authorisation or business visa covers paid event work	UNVERIFIED	Confirm with the official Saudi authority
Which calling apps are on TDRA's approved list today	UNVERIFIED	Check TDRA's list before you travel
How each insurer treats a change in FCDO advice	UNVERIFIED	Policies differ. Use the insurer questions and get answers in writing
When or how FCDO advice will change	Not knowable in advance	Re-check every day and when an alert arrives
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	Ask your airline; the CAA page could not be read in full
Who is legally responsible for a particular person on a particular job	Needs a solicitor	Take legal advice; not covered by the internal wording check

Also check: crew without a British citizen passport, local labour and event permit law, Ramadan 2027 dates, countries outside scope.



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Before you travel, check the live FCDO page for every country:
gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Official sources only: FCDO, legislation.gov.uk, HSE, Acas, NHS, WHO, TravelHealthPro, EASA, CAA and TDRA. Full list in the TB-001 report.

Spotted an error? Tell us via the OTAS Insights page and we will correct it and update the 'Correct as of' date.

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Briefing card • about 1 minute

“Before we travel: check the FCDO page for every country on the route today, and keep your FCDO email alerts on. Keep your own passport. Carry medicines in original packaging, with paperwork, and the insurer’s 24-hour assistance line.

On site, check in at the agreed times by the agreed method. Follow dress, conduct and photography rules. Drink water little and often, and watch each other for heat illness.

Tactical lead: _____ **Check in at:** _____

Muster point: _____ **Shelter point:** _____

If things change, follow local authority instructions and do not touch drone or missile fragments. Anyone can raise a concern and step back without penalty. Any questions?”

Read at the pre-departure briefing and again on arrival. Fill in the blanks first.

Before you travel: the checklist, by level

Operational documents, visa and medicines checked. FCDO alerts on. Check in as agreed. Know the muster and shelter points. Rest before the next job.

Tactical contact plan and check-in schedule. Brief local laws and the heat plan. Map 2 exit routes. Re-check FCDO daily. Debrief and a welfare check on return.

Strategic decide and record why. Insurance in writing for every person. Name roles, deputies and triggers. Fund early exit and rest days.