



[U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh](#)

Arrest of a U.S. Citizen

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***DISCLAIMER:** THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY AND MAY NOT BE APPLICABLE IN ALL CASES. QUESTIONS INVOLVING INTERPRETATION OF SPECIFIC U.S. OR FOREIGN LAWS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO APPROPRIATE LEGAL COUNSEL.*

While traveling or residing in Bangladesh, U.S. citizens are required to abide by Bangladeshi laws. If a U.S. citizen violates Bangladeshi law, he or she is subject to prosecution under Bangladeshi law.

If a U.S. citizen is arrested in Bangladesh, the Embassy can help in specific ways. Someone will visit the arrested person to verify his or her well-being, help communicate with family members, and assist the U.S. citizen in finding legal representation. (All costs for attorneys are the responsibility of the U.S. citizen.)

Here is a list of [legal resources](#) in Bangladesh.

Avoid getting arrested overseas by:

- Following the laws and regulations of the country you are visiting or living in.
- Learning about laws there which might be different from the laws in the United States. We provide some information for each country on our [Country Specific pages](#).

If you are arrested overseas or know a U.S. citizen who is:

- Ask the prison authorities to notify the U.S. Embassy or Consulate
- You may also wish to reach out to the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to let us know of arrest. Contact information for [U.S. Embassy, Dhaka](#) can be found here or by going to our individual [Country Specific Information](#) pages.

The Role of the Embassy

The role of the embassy in an arrest is to ensure: (1) the arrestee is accorded the rights and privileges guaranteed under Bangladeshi law as they apply to Bangladeshi nationals; (2) the arrestee knows the charges against him/her and is given reasonably prompt opportunity for defense; (3) the arrestee is not mistreated in jail or while out on bail.

The Embassy cannot demand or obtain the release of a prisoner. A U.S. passport does not entitle its bearer to any special privileges.

Important: The Bangladeshi government is obliged to notify an arrestee without delay of his/her right to communicate with the consular officer, and promptly to inform the U.S. Embassy, Dhaka, when a U.S. citizen is arrested. In practice, however, this does not always happen.

The Bangladeshi legal system is based on English common law. The basic legal principle of “innocent until proven guilty” prevails. An arrested person has the right to consult an attorney before making a statement. Any statement made to the police can be used against the defendant in court. Under Bangladeshi law, an arrested person must be brought before a magistrate within 24 hours. Offenses are categorized as bailable or non-bailable. In practice, bail is often difficult to obtain for foreigners because the accused requires a local address and individual who will act as surety.

Privacy Act

The provisions of the Privacy Act are designed to protect the privacy and rights of U.S. citizens, but occasionally they complicate our efforts to assist citizens abroad. As a rule, consular officers may not reveal information regarding an individual U.S. citizen’s location, welfare, intentions, or problems to anyone, including family members and Congressional representatives, without the expressed consent of that individual. Although sympathetic to the distress this can cause concerned families, consular officers must comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act.