

# BEYOND BEYOND BEYOND HEADLINES HEADLINES HEADLINES

by Ayda Bashiri

## The US Department of State

provides travel advisories using a 4-Level Scale. Warning levels are determined by factors such as crime rates, disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and more. As of Summer 2024, the levels include the following:



### New York City, New York, U.S.A.

"Wait, what did he yell?" I asked Brittany. Her fiery hair swung as she turned to the eccentric man.

"Somethin' about being the most beautiful women in the world." I turned and found him cackling and holding his belly.

Just as quickly as it happened, the bustling streets of Times Square drowned the man and froze the memory as we glided toward thoughtless plans.

### Cusco, Sacred Valley, Peru

"I should not have worn shorts," I mumbled to Dustin and yanked at the cuffs as we walked. The local workers initiated a transportation strike, so the dirt roads nestled in the Andes were blockaded with rocks and boulders, guarded by villagers, void of vehicles.

Generations stared before us: a seated grandmother, a mother and father performing chores, children sprinkled about, zigzagging the path.

"Bueños Tueños," Dustin stumbled over a greeting, making up his own. I doubled over in laughter, and a crossing man stifled a smirk.

### Tecpán, Chimaltenango, Guatemala

"You are American?" She asked. I nodded. "I am Eirene. I am from Salvador."

"What are you doing in Chimaltenango?" I asked.

"I study at Seminario Bíblico Guatemalteco," she sat taller. "I want to practice English and you practice Spanish. I can...how do you say...take you to coffee? Did I say that correctly?"

"You did." I warmed with gratitude as Eirene walked toward a café a kilometer up the road. A friend, I thought, as our words poured over pastries and mugs.

### Shahin Shahr, Esfahan, Iran

"Haggle!" Sirous demanded. I stood nervously at the counter of a shop in میدان امام (Meidan Emam.)

"How much?" I asked in Farsi. I looked through the glass at a silver and turquoise charm.

"100,000 Rial," the clerk responded.

I sifted through my wallet. My cousin dismissed my hand.

"50,000 Rial," Sirous countered.

"70,000."

"65."

"65," Sirous grinned as he nudged me. I awkwardly exchanged bills for a cloth bag containing the charm. I looked over my shoulder as I left. The clerk stood and chortled.

Wherever it falls among the State Department's least concerning to most cautious advisories, there exists a common thread that transcends borders and warnings: the power of connection. While it is important to heed these warnings and take necessary precautions, my travels have taught me that the human spirit remains resilient.

The way a country is represented on the global stage stands in stark contrast to the day-to-day of folks who, regardless of their circumstances, live with compassion and curiosity. In bustling markets, quiet villages, and even conflict zones, I have been met with smiles, shared meals, and authentic interactions that reinforce universal humanity.

The world, in all its complexity, continues to offer beauty and reveal grace, often in the most unexpected places.

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- **Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions**  
*Canada, Australia, Argentina, Senegal*
- **Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution**  
*Peru, India, Italy, Philippines*
- **Level 3: Reconsider Travel**  
*Guatemala, Nigeria, Pakistan, Colombia*
- **Level 4: Do Not Travel**  
*Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, Sudan*

### **Level 1: New York City, New York, U.S.A.**

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### **Level 2: Cusco, Sacred Valley, Peru**

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“You are from America?” She asked. I nodded. “I am Eirene. I am from Salvador.”

“What are you doing in Chimaltenango?” I asked.

“I study at Seminario Bíblico Guatemalteco,” she sat taller. “I want to practice English and you practice Spanish. I can...how do you say...take you to coffee? Did I say that correctly?”

“You did.” I warmed with gratitude as Eirene walked toward a café a kilometer up the road. *A friend*, I thought, as our words poured over pastries and mugs.

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“100,000 Rial,” the clerk responded.

I sifted through my wallet. My cousin dismissed my hand.

"50,000 Rial," Sirous countered.

"70,000."

"60."

"65."

"65," Sirous grinned as he nudged me. I awkwardly exchanged bills for a cloth bag containing the charm. I looked over my shoulder as I left. The clerk stood with his arms crossed and chortled.

Wherever it falls among the State Department's least concerning to most cautious advisories, there exists a common thread that transcends borders and warnings: the goodness of human connection. While it is important to heed these advisories and take necessary precautions, my travels have taught me that the spirit remains resilient.

The way a country is represented on the global stage stands in stark contrast to the day-to-day functioning of folks who, regardless of their circumstances, live with compassion and curiosity. In bustling markets, quiet villages, and even conflict zones, I have been met with smiles, shared meals, and authentic interactions that reinforce universal humanity. The world, in all its complexity, continues to offer beauty and reveal grace, often in the most unexpected places.