

Ukraine's Court Rules out Chernobyl Zone Trips



Tourist travels to the famed Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster exclusion zone has been officially banned by Ukraine's high court. The authorized prohibition of travel to the place was made after the Emergency Ministry lost its lawsuit filed against Ukraine's General Prosecutor's office.

Last June 2011, the General Prosecutors office already banned all tourist entry to the radioactive zone, in which the Emergency Ministry, who is responsible for these trips, filed a lawsuit against the decision. High officials assessed the legality of the trips and found out that the Emergency Ministry did not have the right to authorize trips to Chernobyl without permission from the Interior Ministry.

Ukraine's own Emergency Ministry began allowing tourist entry to the site just February 2011, in which it has become a steady source of a large sum of US Dollar profit. It has been discovered that around \$100–\$600 are paid in money to be able for a person to get inside, and tour the radiation-contaminated area.



Chernobyl, which is found in the north central part of Ukraine near to the border of Belarus, is the site of the worst nuclear power plant disaster in history that left thousands of people fleeing, displaced and sick. Nevertheless, the region has been attracting a significant number of tourists seeking to experience the exotic thrill of the radioactive landscape.

The General Prosecutors office said media that the fact these trips are ongoing for almost 10 years and given the place itself is dangerous for cases of radiation exposure, the Emergency Ministry has directly violated a 2001 law passed in the Ukrainian parliament concerning the radioactive security of people. It is resolved that no people should be allowed inside the contaminated zone. The office furthermore said that there were Internet and hotel advertisements even after the June 2011 suspension of tourist entry to the place.

Overall, there are about 10,000 tourists each year that visit Chernobyl and its surrounding areas. Forbes magazine actually included this dead zone to its list of world's most exotic tourist destinations.

On the other hand, the Emergency Ministry defended its firm stand on the matter of legalizing the

travels. The ministry said that those trips are an important way of information-sharing to the people on how to avoid such big-scale catastrophes. They emphasized that the profit made in such activities could be used in supporting projects on the desolate land.



The tourist trips, which generated a multi-million dollar business for the Emergency Ministry of Ukraine, are a hit for people seeking adventure. According to Volodymyr Holosha of the Ukrainian state agency for exclusion zone monitoring, the situation could still turn around given that a lot of people want to venture to the place and explore it.

The court in Kiev added that any person, or organization caught helping or smuggling people inside the zone will be treated directly and immediately based on the law. Amid concerns of illegal entries, the General Prosecutors office said that it is inevitable. They told that tourists who want to flock to the area might be given a false identity, such as journalists or other related professions that can easily enter the destination.

Date: 2012-05-28

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-ukraine-rules-out-chernobyl-zone-trips-for-tourists-article-1851>