

DISAPPOINTING FIRST QUARTER FIGURES FOR EGYPT'S TOURISM REVENUE



The state of the Egyptian tourism industry has been poor ever since the political unrest, violence and riots surrounding the overthrow of president Hosni Mubarak in 2011, as the country deals with the aftermath and tourists are deterred from travelling because of uncertainty over the country's stability and threats of violence. While some will have hoped for an improvement in 2013, there was, however, a dramatic drop in revenue and visitor numbers, with the country taking just \$5.9 billion, 41% less than the last annual figure. Given the economical and political turmoil following a second coup – the removal of Mohammad Mursi by the army – these figures are understandable; the problem is that hopes for improvements and a sign of recovery in 2014 have been dashed by the figures for last three months.

Recent reports cast doubt on promising gains or high takings for 2014.

Reports that have just been released for the first quarter of the year show another drop in tourism revenue, this time of 43%, where just \$1.3 billion was taken. There are two important reasons being cited for this poor result: the high-profile bombing in February and the spate of official government warnings that followed. In the past, it has been easy for prospective travellers to ignore some extremist actions because they were strictly an Egyptian matter with no real bearing on their holiday; however, this all changed when a bomber targeted a coach full of Korean tourists and doubt grew over the safety of international visitors. This uncertainty only increased when fifteen countries issued travel warnings to their citizens. It is said that this alone led to a 30% drop in revenue because of the lack of visitors and cancellations. In the end, only 2 million people travelled to the country in the first quarter of 2014 and, even though there is a chance that numbers will grow if the area stabilises and no more warnings are issued, there will have to be strong surges in numbers and revenue to improve upon 2013's disappointing figures.

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