

JORDAN'S TOURISM REVENUE AFFECTED BY NEARBY CONFLICTS



The first quarter of 2015 brought a 15 percent decrease in revenue as tourism in Jordan heads for decline. The high level of instability in the region, with all-out wars taking place in both Iraqi and Syrian territories, caused travelers to avoid the, otherwise peaceful, middle-eastern kingdom.

Nayef Al-Fayez, Jordan's Minister of Tourism declared that too many see the country as directly involved in the conflict, which he deems to be a perception error. **He went on to deny that Jordan has caused or been a part of the violence in the neighboring areas, underlining the fact that, by attributing imaginary fault and issue to Jordan, the country suffers very real, monetary consequences.**

In an effort to turn things around, Nayef Al-Fayez told press that an advertising campaign is planned for the main Jordan attractions, like the Dead Sea and the Petra ancient settlement. If in 2014, Jordan welcomed no less than 5.5 million tourists, creating revenue of 4.4 billion U.S. dollars, 2015's first quarter brought 1.2 billion U.S. dollars from tourism.

When comparing the 2014 figures with the ones from 2010, the latter showing that the kingdom had over 8 million visitors, the decline becomes even more stringent. With the surrounding political turmoil, there's also been a change in visitors' profiles, more recent years registering an increase in diplomats, aid workers, refugees and press, at the expense of actual tourists.

Jordanians are rightfully worried by the current course of events and many predict an even steeper drop in tourism revenues in the years to come, unless measures will be taken.

Ancient Roman archaeological sites, some not fully dug up yet, are the ones that took the biggest hit, with roughly a 50 percent decrease.

The tourism sector has an important role to play in Jordan's GDP, with a contribution of 14 percent, sharing the top spots along revenue brought by Jordanians who work abroad.

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