

ZIKA: LATIN AMERICAN TOURISM IS LIKELY TO SUFFER HEAVY LOSSES



The spread of the Zika virus is increasingly worrying the Latin American tourism authorities as well as the international professionals. According to estimates, the affected countries in Latin America could suffer a financial loss of \$63.9 billion.

Now called a "global public health emergency" by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Zika virus continues to spread. On the American continent alone, 3 to 4 million people might be affected in 2016.

Since the virus presents a real threat to human health, it will probably impact the tourism revenue in several countries across Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to a report from the World Bank, relayed by Forbes, 25 countries will be affected by travel warnings because of the risks related to the Zika virus, something which will likely shelve Latin American tourism and cause a loss of \$63.9 billion (about 53 billion euros) to the countries concerned.

Mexico, which recorded the highest tourism revenue on the continent in 2013 (14.3 billion dollars), is expected to suffer more than the neighboring countries. The Brazilian tourism industry (\$7 billion) would be the second most affected. The country due to host the next Olympic Games in August, already counts 1.5 million carriers of the virus.

Then comes the Caribbean (\$ 11 billion in revenue), Panama (\$5.2 billion), Argentina (\$5 billion), and Colombia (\$4.8 billion).

Note that the figures in Venezuela, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, and Martinique have not yet been disclosed. **Chile, meanwhile, would be the only country on the continent to escape the virus due to its arid climate.** Some now fear that the virus will spread to the United States, the first country in terms of tourism-based revenue with nearly \$215 billion collected in 2013.

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