

CANCUN TOURISM HIT BY RECENT VIOLENCE



Mexican tourism representatives are concerned about the country's situation because 70 per cent of international tourists entering Mexico come via the Riviera Maya, Cancun and Monterrey where there is a large influx of foreigners. Cancun, however, has witnessed several cases of violence and Cancun tourism experts warn that it will impact the amount of visitors.

"The clashes that occurred in Quintana Roo and the killing that occurred in Monterrey will undoubtedly have an impact on the country's tourism and these events will end up affecting the entire country," said Armando de la Garza, Secretary of the Association of Hotels and Motels and Vice President of Tourism in the Chamber of Commerce.

He pointed out that 5 years ago, with 21 million foreigner visitor arrivals, Mexico occupied the number 15 spot in attracting tourists, but two years ago, it dropped to number 9 just ahead of Russia, and **this year it is expected to fall to 8th place recording 35 million tourist arrivals in the country.**

"It's such unfortunate events like the one that occurred in Quintana Roo, and the one in Monterrey, that seriously affect Mexico's image and Cancun tourism and could result in smaller numbers of foreign tourists," he said.

He noted that the authorities have to do their best to find solutions for this kind of social problems because this type of news harmed the industry in Mexico in the past.

"The worst thing we can do is to remain silent. The governments of Quintana Roo, the Federal Government and some people in Nuevo León submitted petitions for this kind of occurrence to be not made public. But how can we not make these things that are happening public, with all the openness we have today in the graphic media and on social networks?"

He argued that the whole society must publicly call on the officials of the municipalities to improve the security. He had strong criticism for the spokesperson for Cancún and Riviera Maya which, from all indications, will not have more than 50,000 guests occupying the same number of rooms because of the shootings recorded by the city.

"How can you tell 50,000 guests not to leave the hotel because the city is in chaos with a string of shootings everywhere? Sometimes the statements of the officials do more harm than good for Cancun tourism. How do you stop it? We no longer have the traditional media; communication is immediate; events are practically live. **We cannot remain silent. If anyone tries to cover things up, then our reputation is affected.**"

The Secretary of the State's Hotel and Motel Association and Vice President of Tourism in the Chamber of Commerce said that this damage to the country's image will make it very difficult for Mexicans to position the country as a safe destination.

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