

# EGYPTIAN TOURISM SUFFERS DUE TO THE LATEST ATTACK



Last week, two Coptic Orthodox churches in Alexandria and in Tanta were targeted by two attacks by Daesh. These attacks, which killed 44 people and injured over 120 people, are likely to stifle the timid recovery of tourism, which has already been severely weakened by the political instability that has reigned since the 2011 revolution. The French embassy in Egypt and the two Consulates

General called on travelers to “exercise extreme vigilance” and “avoid areas at risk.” Nationals are also invited to “stay away from any events and gatherings.” The Egyptian tourism suffers hard.

The double attack is yet another blow for the local travel sector, which has experienced a slight increase in recent months. After a particularly dull 2015-2016 tourism season after the crash of the Russian plane over the Sinai in October 2015, **tourists were avoiding Egypt a little less in recent months, to the great relief of the professionals within the industry.**

In December 2016, the number of tourists visiting Egypt reached 551,600 compared to 440,000 a year earlier. The number of reservations between October and January 2017 was also “higher than for the same period a year ago,” according to Karim Mohsen, president of the Egyptian Federation of Chambers of Tourism, quoted by AFP.

## Tourism Suffers

This slight recovery, perceptible since October, according to several tourism agents in Cairo, was mainly due to the arrival of Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian tourists. In February, Tamer al-Shaer, vice president of the Blue Sky Travel group, spoke of an increase in reservations of “30% for Ukrainians” over one year and even “60% for Chinese clients.”

However, the Westerners have remained more cautious, although according to the last report from the union of French tour operators (Seto), “Egypt welcomed 15.2% more French travelers between November 1, 2016 and February 28 2017.” A slight improvement since, to put things in perspective, from the years 2015-2016, Seto recorded a decline in purchases of medium-haul flight seats to Egypt by 54%.

As a reminder, after the crash of the Russian plane at the end of 2015, the number of tourists had dropped to 5.3 million in 2016, against 9.3 million the previous year, according to the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism. Tourism revenues then fell by 7.3 billion dollars for the fiscal year of June 2014/June 2015 to 3.7 billion dollars the following year, according to the Central Bank report, published in December.

## Promotional Offers

Despite the current environment, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) is expecting tourism to recover in Egypt over the next decade. **While in 2016 tourism accounted for 7.2% of GDP, the organization expects a share of 8.9% of GDP in 2027.**

In addition, the WTTC foresees an increase in direct and indirect jobs linked to tourism. From 1,639,000 jobs in this industry in 2017, the WTTC expects 2,573,000 tourism jobs in Egypt in ten

years.

In an attempt to revive the tourism industry, which is one of the four main industries of activity and wealth in the land of the Nile, the country announced last September a plan to boost tourism by 70 million dollars (63 million euros) over three years. Promotions, lower airport taxes, service roads leading from provincial airports... Despite the efforts of tour operators, the two attacks on Sunday are likely to cause tourists to flee. Egyptian tourism suffers and needs to come up with effective strategies to attract visitors again.

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