

SHARK ATTACKS IMPACT EGYPTIAN TOURISM



At the moment, Egyptian shores are not safe. With numerous shark attacks in Sharm El-Sheikh, the country strives to secure the safety of its visitors as the shark hunt continues.

Recent weeks in the immensely popular Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Sheikh turned a nightmare, as several holiday makers were attacked by sharks. Initially, it appeared to be an individual, one-off incident; however, as five attacks were recorded in six days, caution is crucial. **Local authorities decided to close the beaches after three Russian and one Ukrainian tourist were attacked.** The Ministry of Tourism in Egypt fears the attacks will have a negative impact on the number of visitors.

Tourism presents approximately 11 % of local GDP, generating employment for 12-13 % of the population. Especially Russian tourists represent more than a tenth of all visitors each year and **Russian tourist agencies have already recorded a 20% drop in holiday bookings.** In fear of losing their valued customers, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism vowed to pay \$50,000 in compensation to Russian tourists affected by the attacks.

A team of marine biologists was urged to come help explain the sharks' aggressive behavior and how to prevent it. The predator is a white-tipped shark, which according to locals is quite rare in Egyptian waters. After one animal was captured, the government chose to open the beaches yet the horrified beach visitors witnessed another deadly attack on a German snorkeler only a few meters off shore.

While the experts argue what might be causing these unheard off fits of aggression, **local authorities are planning to spread out nets along the beaches to protect swimmers and snorkelers from further attacks.** However, until the sharks are captured, not many visitors will have the courage to return.

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