

TOURISM IN MEXICAN STATES HIT HARD BY EARTHQUAKES



Tourism in the Mexican states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Morelos, and Puebla – the most affected by the earthquakes of September 7th and 19th – has been hit hard due to the perception that the local buildings and monuments were damaged and the fear of travelers of another earthquake.

In September 2017 the tourism arrivals to these states fell 23 percent on average compared to the same month of the previous year, according to the Secretary of Tourism (Sectur).

In addition, the hotel occupancy rate fell by 8 percent in these Mexican states, and reached an average of 29 percent.

"It was a hard hit for tourism in these states; we had many cancellations after the September 7th earthquake because people are scared. Subsequently, when the earthquake of September 19th occurred, the country's largest travel market (Mexico City) also succumbed. Tourism in the whole country collapsed," said Rafael García, president of the Mexican Association of Hotels and Motels (AMHM).

More than 20 million inhabitants of the capital and its metropolitan area stopped traveling after September 19th. In Mexico City, the hotel occupancy in the week after the September 19th earthquake fell 21.4 percent, reaching a total of 47.6 percent – the occupancy rate during the same period of 2016 was 69 percent – according to the agency.

Those five Mexican states contribute 25 percent to the country's tourism GDP.

"It's a direct impact on tourism in these states since churches, monuments and streets, among other things were damaged," said Enrique de la Madrid, head of Sectur, after the earthquakes.

While visiting the affected states, the federal government identified 1,821 archaeological, artistic and historical monuments which were damaged.

In addition, after the earthquake there were reported damages in Pueblos Mágicos de Cholula (Puebla); Mitla (Oaxaca), Tepoztlán and Tlayacapan (Morelos); Chiapa de Corzo and San Cristobal de las Casas (Chiapas).

Regarding beach destinations, Huatulco was the most affected with a 51 percent decrease in tourism numbers; followed by Puerto Escondido with a 21 percent drop in travel arrivals; while

Cuernavaca, Puebla and Oaxaca received 15, 10 and 2 percent fewer visitors, respectively.

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