

IMAGE OF TOURISM IN HONDURAS HARMED BY UNRESTS

The Honduran tourism authorities from the private and public sectors plan to work hard on improving the image of the country at an international level, following the violent incidents caused by the current political crisis. Tourism in Honduras has been one of the sectors hit the hardest.

The representative of the National Chamber of Tourism of Honduras (CANATURH), Armando Fúnez, confirmed that they reviewed the country's strategic tourism plan, together with the other entities in order to reduce the damage of the public image, and attract visitors.

"Our expectation is now substantially lower. Many travel groups canceled their trips and flights," said Fúnez.

The 'industry without a chimney', as tourism in Honduras is also known, generates 250 thousand direct jobs, and last year **raised 850 million dollars as a result of the arrival of more than 2.2 million foreign visitors.**

Armando Fúnez warned that the problem began with violent uprising damaging one of the hotels in the capital and the building of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP).

"Every action like that deepens the crisis in which we are," said the director.

Expectations are focused on the Holy Week period, which is the last week of March, when the country expects three million tourists, and an income of 254 million USD.

The largest flow of tourists during these holidays is that of the domestic travelers, followed by Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Costa Ricans, who arrive through Honduras' Bay Islands.

"We hope that the political situation calms down by the Holy Week. We are looking forward to February with a clean image, and in March we will use all of our tourist benefits, both for foreigners and domestic tourists. On behalf of 250 thousand locals who depend on tourism in Honduras, we hope to reach peace and tranquility, that all of the problems are resolved through dialogue. Tourism is the economic platform that the country will have in short term, but it will depend on the good image that we can convey", concluded Armando Fúnez.

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