

NICARAGUA: TOURISM REVENUE TO DROP BY 500 MILLION USD



Paramilitarization in the Island of Ometepe aggravates the insecurity and crisis experienced by the tourism sector of Nicaragua.

The Island of Ometepe, an example of national and international tourism, has been the new target of the Sandinista police and paramilitaries, who have been relentless in their goal to persecute and arrest protestors. **“The presence of military and paramilitary is affecting the image of the island as a tourist destination and consequently the tourism revenue,”** said Lucy Valenti, president of the National Chamber of Tourism of Nicaragua (CANATUR).

In its latest report, CANATUR emphasized that due to the crisis that the country is experiencing, tourism revenues will be short by 400 million USD compared to 2017, and will lose an estimate (before the crisis) of 500 million by the end of this year.

Valenti said that the demand of the tourist industry is to guarantee stability in Nicaragua, but the violent situation lived throughout the Island of Ometepe “sends the wrong signals to the outside (abroad).” This led to cancellation of international flights as well as several travel alerts from different embassies, in order to warn their citizens about visiting the country.

“The damage is very serious,” regretted Valenti, who also added that some 600,000 tourists stopped visiting Nicaragua.

“We are seeing that at any moment there are repression incidents anywhere because of the protests of the people... this doesn’t benefit the stability and security levels of the country and the image of Nicaragua,” said the president of CANATUR.

Lucy Valenti insisted that repression, violence and arrests send a wrong signal of the country, forcing visitors to change their destination. “This happens every moment, before the eyes of the whole world, and that sends signals abroad that Nicaragua is not a safe country, that it is not stable, that it is not a country where the fundamental rights of the people are respected, and **that means that those travel warnings remain and affect tourists who schedule and decide where to spend their holidays, and that obviously excludes Nicaragua,**” she mentioned.

Although the tourism sector has been largely hit by the socio-political climate, Valenti stressed out that the most concerning factor was those who “live and suffer the consequences of this repression.”

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