

AZERBAIJAN: ARABIC TOURISTS COME IN LOWER NUMBERS



Azerbaijan is currently dealing with a decrease in interest in the country and a much lower number of tourists arriving in the country. This is especially a problem with the Arabic tourists, who represent the driving source market of the country.

The head of the Azerbaijan Tourism Association (AZTA), Nahid Bagirov, has pointed out the issue and its importance. “At present, before attracting new tourists, say, from Western countries, we should keep what we already have. That is, Arabic tourists. Only after that, you can think about how to attract tourists from other regions. **Currently, there is a significant decrease in the number of tourists from Arab countries visiting Azerbaijan,**” he said.

“Now there is a situation where they [Arabs] remain in our country for no more than two days. In recent years, on the eve of the Novruz holiday in our country, especially in Baku, there has always been a lack of free rooms for tourists. Now, the situation is different. Hotels today are filled only at a 30–40% rate,” Bagirov noted.

According to him, one of the reasons for the current situation in the tourism market overall is the economic problems in Iran. Compared to previous years, there has been a decrease in the number of tourists arriving from the country. The problem with Arabic tourists is similar. The only positive side of the current situation is the rise in visitors from Georgia and Russia. However, most of these are Azerbaijanis living in these countries.

“Today our priority is Arabic tourists. But, unfortunately, recently there has been a decrease in their number. At present, our hope is associated with the summer season, we hope that there will be more of them here in the summer,” Bagirov added.

The director sees a solution in the cooperation between the state and the private sector.

According to him, the State Agency of Tourism should be more active in the market. People engaged in this field should be more professional, with professional entrepreneurs involved in this work. It is impossible to put all responsibility on the government. The work should be jointly carried out by the state and private sector. “The state should be in constant contact with local entrepreneurs, take their opinions into account,” he concluded.

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