

TOURISM IN SHARM EL-SHEIKH HIT BY THE PRESENCE OF MUBARAK



The hotel occupancy rate in Sharm el-Sheikh has dropped considerably reportedly because of the presence of Hosni Mubarak in a local hospital. Egyptian Tourism Committee suggests moving the former president away from the city to help the travel trade.

In an effort to help local travel trade, the Egyptian Tourism Committee proposed that former president Hosni Mubarak be transferred out of Sharm el-Sheikh, the world known Red Sea resort. According to Mr. Ahmed Balbaa, head of the Egyptian Businessmen Association committee, **Mubarak should be sent to another hospital outside the city because his presence is negatively affecting the city's tourism.**

"The fact that local hotels are experiencing sharp drop of tourists can be directly linked to the presence of Mubarak," proclaimed Balbaa. According to him, foreign tour organizers fear protesters will enter the city to escalate their demands for Mubarak's prosecution.

"Instead of sitting in a jail for financial corruption cases, that are now being investigated, he is under arrest in a local hospital since April, allegedly due to a heart attack," said Balbaa.

Within a few days, the Tourism Committee will submit documents to Prime Minister Essam Sharaf and the Supreme Military Council offering solutions to increase tourism. **Egypt's tourism industry losses are costing Egypt almost US\$40 million daily.**

The Committee suggests that Mubarak be taken to a remote hospital outside of Sharm el-Sheikh, so that the situation calms down and potential visitors are not afraid to come. Balbaa said that the deteriorating situation also resulted in lower salary of the local travel industry employees.

Balbaa compared the tourist numbers of Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada resorts, also located on the Red Sea. "There is clear evidence that in Hurghada no sharp drop in tourist traffic occurred as in Sharm el-Sheikh. If it were not for the presence of Mubarak, Sharm el-Sheikh would be doing much better, in terms of the inbound tourism," proclaimed Balbaa.

During the unrest in Egypt, hotel occupancy rates and tourism revenues declined in all of the country's popular tourist destinations.

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