

CHINESE TOURISM TO CANADA IS AFFECTED BY TENSIONS BETWEEN OTTAWA AND BEIJING



Canada remains excluded from Beijing-approved tourist destinations due to accusations of political "interference," the Chinese embassy in Ottawa said amid tensions between the two countries. China lifted a ban on group travel to more than 70 countries, including the United States, including the United States, on Thursday that had been in force since the Covid health crisis, giving hope for the return of many Chinese tourists abroad.

But Beijing has yet to lift restrictions on Canada, which welcomed nearly 700,000 Chinese tourists in 2018. Relations between the two countries have since deteriorated due to the Huawei affair and suspicions of political tension. "In recent times, the Canadian side has consistently insisted on so-called 'Chinese interference,' and widespread discriminatory acts and statements against Asians are rising in Canada." The Chinese embassy in Canada explained that restrictions on group travel to Canada had not been lifted.

In December 2018, Canada arrested Huawei's chief financial officer at Washington's request. A few days later, Canadian businessman Michael Spavor and former diplomat Michael Kovrig were detained in China, a measure perceived as retaliation. While the three have since been released, tensions persist between the two countries, with Beijing blaming Ottawa for aligning itself with Washington's China policy and Canadian authorities regularly accusing China of interfering in its public affairs.

In recent months, suspicions of Chinese interference in the last two federal elections have put Justin Trudeau's government under pressure from opposition parties and led to Ottawa's expulsion of a Chinese diplomat. The head of the Niagara Falls tourism board, one of the country's most visited sites, Janice Thomson, called Beijing's decision "disappointing" and hoped that Canada would be among the following countries to allow Chinese tour groups.

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