

# EGYPT FEARS TWO ISRAELI TOURISTS KILLED IN ALEXANDRIA WILL IMPACT THE TOURISM SECTOR



The recent killing of two Israeli tourists and an Egyptian citizen, as well as the injury of another person by an Egyptian policeman in Alexandria, has raised concerns about the impact of the incident on Egypt's tourism sector. This is especially concerning in light of optimistic statements from Egyptian officials regarding "positive results in the tourism sector during 2023".

Egypt is currently under pressure to increase foreign currency reserves. Tourism and remittances represent the country's two primary sources of US dollar income.

Tourism experts have pointed out that the recent accident in Alexandria is likely to impact Israeli and American tourism directly. However, projects related to the tourism and antiquities sectors will continue. In fact, the city of Alexandria is expected to witness official visits and large foreign delegations in the days following the opening of the Roman Museum. It is too early to judge the direct impact of the Alexandria accident on Egyptian tourism. Still, there is no doubt that there is concern about the sensitivity of the accident, especially when the tourism sector has not experienced stability in years.

Tourism experts believe that the tourism sector in Egypt has witnessed remarkable progress during the current year in terms of the number of delegations, reservations, and the diversity of tourism sectors that attracted Europe and Asia in particular. In all countries of the world, there are seasons of rise and fluctuation in the tourism sector. Undoubtedly, political events are a critical factor in this change. The escalation in the region may affect tourism in general. Still, the Egyptian state's containment of (the Alexandria incident) and investigations and calm are expected to reduce the impact of this incident.

The Egyptian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Ahmed Issa, said last September, "Egypt aims to reach 15 million tourists by the end of 2023." He noted that the sector is witnessing "a 40% growth in the volume of tourist traffic coming to Egypt from January to July of this year, compared to the same period last year."

## **The most prominent security incidents against Israelis in Egypt**

The serious security incident in Alexandria led to the death of two Israelis and an Egyptian tour guide. It is not the first of its kind since Egypt and Israel signed the peace treaty in 1979, as several incidents preceded it. It began with the Ras Cyrenaica incident in 1985, in which 7 Israelis were killed after Egyptian soldier Suleiman Khater shot them with his rifle while guarding the border at point 46 in Nuweiba, South Sinai.

In 1990, Egyptian soldier Ayman Hassan killed 20 Israeli soldiers, including a Mossad commander, and wounded 21 others after he reached a point 13 kilometers from the city of Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba, on a road linking it to the city of Rafah, and got to the Negev airport. Observers have dubbed the incident "Ras al-Naqab."

In February 2012, the Israeli army announced that one of its soldiers and three militants had been killed in an exchange of fire with a group it said was coming from Egypt.

In April of the same year, following the overthrow of the regime of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu considered that Sinai had turned into a base for "terrorists" after a missile was fired from Sinai at the Israeli Red Sea resort of Eilat, without casualties.

Near the Al-Awja crossing, according to Egyptian authorities, an Israeli worker was killed during clashes between smugglers and Egyptian border guards in 2016 as part of anti-smuggling activities.

In June 2023, the Israeli army announced that 3 Israeli soldiers were killed and others wounded by bullets near the border with Egypt after an Egyptian conscript from the international border security forces broke through the security barrier, exchanged fire with Israeli soldiers, and killed the Egyptian soldier in those clashes.

The latest Alexandria incident is the seventh in this context, although it differs because it is directed at tourists, not a border incident.

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