

# VIOLENCE IN ECUADOR IMPACTS THE TOURISM SECTOR IMAGE



The images of the assault in Ecuador have been widely broadcast on television channels across the world. The subsequent declaration of an "internal armed conflict" in the country has resulted in numerous cancellations of reservations by international tourists. This situation has been feared to deal an even worse blow than the coronavirus pandemic.

Raúl García, the president of the Chamber of Tourism of Pichincha, a province whose capital is Quito, has acknowledged that these circumstances affect them and lead to many cancellations. Ecuador's image abroad has deteriorated significantly impacting the tourism sector. **However, he has emphasized that the country's main tourist sites operate normally.**

Despite a series of violent events attributed to organized crime, such as car explosions and fires, kidnappings and killings of police officers, prison riots with hostages, and the takeover above of the television medium, the country continues to operate.

## Transportation & Safety

Despite canceling some flights over the past two days, airports are fully operational with heightened security measures. Public transportation still operates but with fewer passengers, particularly on interprovincial journeys. Police and military patrols are visible on the streets in certain areas.

## Gradual Tourism Sector Recovery

The number of people visiting Ecuador has been gradually increasing. Still, some popular tourist spots remain closed, like Plaza Grande, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1978, and some parts of the Malecón in Guayaquil. The President, Lenin Moreno, expressed his concern that the recent incidents of violence and insecurity in Ecuador have negatively impacted the country's image on the world stage. However, he emphasized that these events were localized to certain areas, not places frequented by tourists, such as the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon.

## Warnings and Calls to Visit Ecuador

Various countries have advised their citizens to take extra security and safety measures while staying in the country and only to make essential trips. However, **Garcia is inviting everyone to visit Ecuador and is assuring that the private tourism sector and authorities have taken the necessary steps to ensure the well-being of tourists** and avoid any inconvenience. He even believes declaring an "internal armed conflict" can provide greater security.

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