

PUERTO RICO INCREASES POLICE PRESENCE IN TOURIST ZONES



Puerto Rico has a new policy to increase police presence on its beaches and in tourist AREAS to relieve visitor fears of the rising number of murders on the Caribbean island.

The homicide rate of Puerto Rico was never really a threat to tourism; the murders mostly involved drug crime and tourists were very rarely targeted. The problem now is that violent crime is creeping into tourist areas and is on the rise.

The popular areas around the capital San Juan are no longer the safe haven they used to be and Puerto Rican authorities are worried that tourists could be put off from visiting. **As tourism is a \$3.5 billion industry in Puerto Rico, employing in excess of 5 million people, drastic steps have been taken in the form of extra police presence and improved security to reassure visitors the area remains safe.**

50 new officers are expected to be now on duty at the airport and to cover the area between the airport and the capital. The officers shall be visible on horseback, on foot, in cars and on bikes as they attempt to make themselves as visible as possible. The idea behind having police reinforcements on beaches is to end up with less garbage, more satisfied tourists and more lifeguards at the same time.

Hotel residency rates were up 4% in the first quarter of this year in comparison with 2010, leading to a high level of optimism in the tourism sector of Puerto Rico. These, indeed, were the first increases in just over 5 years and sustaining such success is imperative in light of such competition in the Caribbean area. The crime scene has begun to pose a real threat. Hopefully, it will be eradicated by greater police involvement.

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