

PHILIPPINES STILL SUFFERING FROM HOSTAGE TRAGEDY



The Luneta park hostage crisis in the Philippines had a greater impact on tourism from Hong Kong than people originally thought. Hong Kong tourists, somewhat unsurprisingly, are now reluctant to visit the country.

The problem concerning the events of August 2010 involving a disgruntled former senior inspector and a busload of tourists from Hong Kong in Luneta park in Manila was not that a hijack situation had occurred yet mostly concerned the way the police handled the situation. After 8 Hong Kong nationals lost their lives, fierce public criticism began about the way the police handled the situation in general. **Indeed, this led to the Hong Kong government announcing a “black” travel alert against the Philippines.**

The results of this bad press are still being felt today after Hong Kong visits dropped to a record low in February this year as a result of the coroner’s report. **The rate of incoming tourism from Hong Kong dropped by a stunning 29.8%.** The significance of this figure has been highlighted by the fact that the Philippines have been enjoying a steady rate of growth in recent times. Indeed, the Philippines have so far welcomed 3.52 million more visitors this year than ever before.

Hong Kong and the Philippine tourist board have been working together and negotiating a way to convince Hong Kong residents that the Philippines are actually safe and that the Mendoza incident was a one-off. Indeed, it is widely believed that it was a mere coincidence that Hong Kong tourists were targeted. They just happened to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. Convincing people of this would go a long way towards rectifying the \$12 million losses caused by the Luneta park horrors.

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