

# The impact of terrorism on tourism tourism essay



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In this study the main discussion will be about the impact of terrorism on tourism, how it is affecting tourism in any country and in this study the writer will discuss in particular about Egypt and how the tourism industry in particular has been affected by these terrorist attacks.

The main reason why the writer thinks that this area should be discussed is because many countries are affected with the action of terrorism and terrorists even though they happen to be safe countries. These kinds of attacks don't represent the country as a whole, they are groups of people who have issues with the government and they want to be in the spotlight and get media coverage from all over the world by attacking tourists.

The main benefit from this research is to find out the main reason for these attacks, what are the consequences of the attacks on the tourism industry of

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Egypt? Why do terrorists attack tourists? How did they face it in the past and how should the country react upon terrorism in the future?

Main data collection will be from journals and books; it is based on secondary research findings only. Then again there are some limitations of secondary research available in hand but there are some alternative ways to get the information needed for the study.

The objective of this study is to analyse the impact of terrorism on tourism, which includes tourists' movement and the consequences on the destination.

The study will focus on the affects that the destination faces after the attacks, and how this kind of attacks affects tourism in the country.

Tourism is a main income for many countries in the world; most of the developing countries are dependent on it even the less developed countries are counting on tourism as a second source of income after petrol, so it is fastest growing economic sectors in the developed/developing world (Aly & Strazicich, n. d.).

“ In the late 1960s and 1970s, tourism was often promoted as a way to reduce persistent balance of payment deficit and as a major source of foreign exchange” (Essner, 2003). And it was direct and indirect on the government revenue, it was “ recognized as a means to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on traditional agriculture and industry” (Aly & Strazicich, n. d.).

Simple terrorist attacks can affect on the tourism revenue, and this would be a bad impact on the country foreign exchange (Essner, 2003).

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It has been hard to define the word terrorism but one of the definitions describes it as:

“ Any act taken with extraordinary methods including the use of force and violence with the aim of influencing social and political structure”  
(Kucukaltan 2006, p. 29).

Egypt is one of the countries that depend on tourism, previous statement shows that in 2002 tourism represented 26% of their foreign exchange (write fix, 2010). However, due to some terrorist attacks this can change, such as in 1998 tourism has been affected very badly it has been reduced from 3, 727 in 1997 to 2, 565 in 1998 (Essner, 2003).

In the next sections the author will be disusing about the methodology of this research, the literature review and solution and recommendations if available.

### **Methodology:**

“ Secondary analysis is a form of research in which the data collected and processes by a researcher are reanalyzed by another, often for different purpose” (Babbie 2007, p. 227).

Using secondary data has its advantages and disadvantages, to start with, its advantages: It is faster to collect and at a lower price than the primary data, it can provide the researchers with their research start point and help to define the research problem and learn the objectives (Kotler, et al., 2008).

The disadvantages of using a secondary data research is: the needed information may not be researched or may not exist, or the definition needed is different or inappropriate for the research on hand (Kotler, et al., 2008).

In this study the main resources that will be used are secondary resources.

Most data collected will consist of relevant academic books, previous case study researches and the internet.

The main books that will be used in this study will be from: *Tourism and Terrorism* by Professor Derman Kucukaltan, other books are more about terrorism and its conflict on the world, such a book: *Global terrorism* by James M. Lutz and Brenda J.

On the other hand there are some academic books also available on Google books that will be used in this study such as: *Inside Terrorism* by Bruce Hoffman, and another book about the Mediterranean tourism edited By Yiorgos Apostolopoulos, Philippos J. Loukissas, Lila Leontidou, the chapter in the book is about tourism in Egypt written by Turgut Var and Kahlid Zakaria El Adli Imam.

In addition to the books there are few reports and researches done about the impact of terrorism and tourism in Egypt, such as the one written by: Mark Bennet and Harry Bray and another report written by Hassan Aly and Strazicich from The Ohio State University.

Other information about Egypt tourism statistics, recent terrorist attacks in Egypt news and figures will be used from some Internet sources, such as Al

Jazeera English web site, BBC news, npr station online broadcasting and many more other websites.

## **Literature review:**

### **Terrorism and tourism:**

“ Global Terrorism is a concern for all” (Suder, 2006).

To begin with it is important that terrorism and tourism is defined.

Researchers had been giving many different definition of terrorism and it is difficult to define it, but from the writer point of view, the most appropriate definition will be that:

“ Terrorism is a form of war; its goal is to destroy economies through random death and panic” (Tarlow, 2006, p. 82).

It is also described as the planned, politically motivated attack perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub national groups or secret against usually intended to influence an audience (download it, n. d.).

Terrorism may also be a use of violence or threat of violence against civilians; in general terrorism could be defined as “ any act taken with extraordinary methods including the use of force and violence with the aim of influencing social and political structure” (Kucukaltan, 2006, p. 29).

These are only some of the definition about terrorism but all the definition has a common principle about terrorism which is; that terrorism is a kind of violence.

Most countries countenance national and/ or global fear of unending terrorism, especially after September 11; it became a priority of the world to fight against terrorism and to stop the growing number of terrorist organization (Kucukaltan, 2006). In addition there are different kinds of terrorist attacks, such as: Kidnapping, explosions, murder and hostage taking (Das & Kratcoski, 2003).

However tourism is the world number one industry and the service is reliant on the people's protection and their security (Schuelke, 2000). And it is one of the fastest growing economic sector in the world and in Egypt since 1987 (Apostolopoulos, et al., 2001).

In addition according to Aly and Strazicich (n. d.) report, tourism was recognized for its direct and indirect impact on government revenue and as a mean of diversifying the economy and reduces dependence on traditional agriculture and industry.

Terrorism is confused with criminal behaviour, yet they are totally different elements. Tourism crime is a business while terrorism is unwisely motivated by a group of people. Crime is known nationally in the country, but terrorism is known internationally because of media interest they get (Tarlow, 2006).

According to Das and Kratroski (2003, p210) a terrorist mean: " whoever practices violence and terrorism for realizing a political objective and anyone who resorts to terrorism for consuming power". In addition " Terrorists seek to destroy nations or governments through random death that lead to an economic collapse, terrorists goals are different in that they seek the

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distribution of a tourism industry rather than the personal or commercial benefits from a specific action” (Tarlow, 2002). Furthermore terrorist are willing to lose and risk their life in order to achieve their goals (Tarlow, 2002).

And this is exactly what is happening in Egypt, all the attacks are done by angry people who are not agreeing with the government and so terrorism is the answer to their anger and achieving their goal, and because they want their voice to be heard they intend to seek media attention. “ Because terrorist seek media attention any event is an open target for terrorist” (Tarlow, 2002). Moreover, the press and the media have a huge impact on them as they put them on the spotlight in any negative event (Das & Kratoski, 2003). And from the writer point of view the media as well have a an affect on the destination image after broadcasting any event that had happened in that destination, it might build a good reputation or break the reputation of the destination.

### **The history of terrorism in Egypt:**

Egypt tourism has a long history; it started during the presidential of Anwar Al Sadat, when he first made peace with Israel. This opened and changed the view of the Westerns to the Arabs and their leaders (Apostolopoulos, et al., 2001). Tourism represents one of the most beneficial sectors of Egypt economy but it is highly in danger to internal violence and regional politics (Apostolopoulos, et al., 2001). In other way it is unstable domestic economy that Egypt has.



It all has started in the late 1970's when al-gama'a al-Islamiya began insulting and fighting the revolution that Egypt was going through, they targeted government officials, Coptic Christians, policemen's, officers and tourists (Essner, 2003). These extremist Muslims group (al-gama'a al-Islamiya) launched their campaign all over again in 1992, this time their main targets were foreigner tourists, these terrorist attacks has paralysed the government and damaged the tourism between 1992 and early 1994 (Apostolopoulos, et al., 2001).

Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya are responsible for all the terrorist attacks that happened for the last 12 years, when they started first in 1992 they attacked a German cruise which no one was killed from the tourist but three Egyptian were hurt, then they attempted another attack in the same month where they killed a British tourist and wounded two others (Essner, 2003).

In summer 1994 Egypt experienced a revival in their tourism industry and it rose again, furthermore their main tourists were mainly from the Gulf States (Apostolopoulos, et al., 2001). After a refresh growth of tourism, in 1996 there was another attack on tourists that killed 18 Greek tourists and another attack in the same month killed more than 58 persons who were mostly tourists (Apostopoulos, et al., 2001).

Egypt tourism has lots of ups and downs. All this was affected by the terrorist attacks on tourist, tourism revenue increased enormously from 1994 to 1995, by 34% in 1995. And from 1995 to 1996 it fell by nearly 15% and it continued into 1997 where it fell 3% more (Essner, 2003). Although of all these attacks that Egypt had faced through the last 12 years, Tourism still

plays a very big role in its economy, they got used to it and they copped with it. Tourists still visit Egypt but they are not satisfied with the security, but because it is a beautiful country tourist sacrifice and go to visit it.

The main type of terrorism in Egypt is:

Terrorism targeting a political regime: The aim is to destroy the government system, they want to send a message to the world and they want the government to use the Shari'a Law.

National Terrorism: The attacks are only in Egypt, they don't attack other countries and they have no support from outside the country.

Organizational Terrorism: means " Any kind of violent action carried out by two or more people to reject state regime and its application to debilitate state authority and to give messages to national and/ or international public opinion" (Kucukaltan, 2006, p. 39). And the main terrorism organizations in Egypt are Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya.

(Kucukaltan, 2006).

### **Terrorism targets:**

Terrorist always attack people who are not protected and have weak security (Das & Kratcoski, 2003). Therefore they " have often used tourists as targets, because they are easy to attack and attract a lot of attention from the media" (Frey, 2004, p17). Likewise the main targets of these terrorist attacks in Egypt are to be targeted on foreign tourist (Hazbun, 1997).

Tourist has always been the main targets of Egypt terrorist attacks, from the beginning of this revolution in 1992 till 2009 all attacks were involved in tourist locations, such as in Luxor, Egyptian museum, Khan Al-Khalili souk in old Cairo and many other locations, in addition to the attacks it was the first foreign woman to be killed in a terrorist attack in 1992 (AL Jazeera English, 2008).

Terrorists are attacking tourist destination because they know that tourism is Egypt main income to the country and they are attacking many foreigners and this will provide them with high media coverage.

Kucukaltan (2006) identifies the main reasons why terrorist attacks tourism and these reasons are:

Because attacks on tourism have immediate repercussions in the world public opinion.

It damages the image of the country.

It damages the economy of the country by destroying their tourism image.

It creates an international diplomatic-crisis environment between the country and the country of the target of the victim.

Therefore it is understandable from the above evidence and the reasons for these terrorist attacks to be held; it is also clear that the main targets for terrorist in Egypt are the foreign tourists. This has a huge impact on tourism as tourist has become common targets of these terrorist attacks, all these attacks has an affect on the tourist decision making, as tourist have fear and

insecurity to travel to a country with a previous terrorist attacks, and this will create a barrier to the travellers and as a result a limitation to the growth of tourism will occur (Cooper et al., 2008).

### **The impact of terrorist attacks:**

The main and most negatively affected from these attacks is the GPD of the country; the country will lose a lot of its income because of these terrorist attacks (Frey, 2004). Moreover, the second most important is that the country loses its sense of safety and security which will make tourists and the locals feel unsafe staying or living in that area (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). Terrorism has a significant affect on tourism, for example: it can influence people of the advantages of living in the country side than in the city, because high population cities make them a target for terrorists. The transportation costs will increase; it also has a huge affect on the country revenue, especially if tourism's is one of the main revenue of the country GPD (Frey, 2004).

On the other hand the “ Tourism marketing is the managerial process of anticipating and satisfying existing and potential visitors wants, it also means securing environmental and social needs as well as core consumer satisfaction” (Fyall & Garrod 2005, p. 42). Therefore it is important that the destination has a good marketing image, and terrorism has a large negative impact on the destination image, for example one of these impacts of terrorism will be the “ Media” whenever there is an event of a negative nature that is covered by the media it will have a huge impact on tourist demand, and this will help to destroy the destination image (Fyall & Garrod, 2005).

## **The recovery period after the attack:**

Recovery is defined as: "The act, process, duration or an instance of recovering" (The free dictionary, 2010).

However, to get a full recovery from a terrorist attack it is not enough to get back to where you began before the attack, it is important that they reach the level where they are suppose to reach if the attack didn't happen to the destination (Bonham, et al., 2006).

For Egypt to achieve full recovery they must achieve it by increasing their tourist arrival number faster and not just to where they were before the attack but where they are suppose to be if the attack didn't happen (Bonham, et al., 2006).

There has been different ways that the Egyptian Government and especially the tourism industry had been trying in order to recover after the terrorist attacks since 1992. firstly, after the first attack in 1992 the government allocated US \$25m to promote tourism in Egypt, they started by doing a campaign to help recovering, in 1995 and 1996 Egypt tourism industry recovered very strongly, through their visitors arrivals, number of nights and visitors spent has increased remarkably. This was due to the campaign which helped in developing new businesses such as building new hotels and resorts in the Red Sea Cost and Sinai Cost (Dean, 2004).

When any tourism industry is under a high pressure and trying to recover from negative shock, the tour operators and the destination start to reduce their prices to sell and make the destination more competitive and attract more visitors (Cooper et al., 2008).

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The airlines and hotels are the most to be affected by the attacks as they reduce their prices significantly and this is because they want to maintain their occupancy level (Cooper et al., 2008). And this what had had happened to Egypt Air after the attacks in 1997, as many tourists cancelled their flights, and the airlines lost around 85, 000 passenger, and at the end of the year they have announced their loss by 240 million Egyptian Pounds, it was a bad year for the company as they also had to reduce 50% of their domestic flights prices (Dean, 2004).

Additionally an experience from other tourist-reliant destination such as Turkey and Israel indicates that it is unpredictable to know the revival of tourism after such an attack on the destination (Gurtner, 2004).

There are few points that could help in recovering fast after any terrorist attack, such as:

Response requires ingenuity and resilient attitude from the local community.

Recreating a positive image of the destination, by international marketing and public relation;

The government should ensure safety and security for the locals and the tourists.

And many other ways in recovering such crisis (Gurtner, 2004).

Recovering is the most important aspect that the government should be concerned about after any attack or crisis the country might be facing. For Egypt it has been hard to attempt a good recovery, because whenever they

recover from the attack they face another attack after a short time. And this makes it difficult for them to recover a full recovery, because they always have to start from the point they left it before the attack and start all over again.

Tourism in Egypt can be unpredictable and it has been described as a snake and Ladder, the tourists are tempted up the “ Ladder” by a wealth of sea resorts, natural desert beauty and multi-layers of Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic cultures, then tourists are plunged into the “ Snake-pit” by terrorism and regional insecurity (Aly & Strazicich, n. d.).

## **Decisions and analysis**

As it has been discussed previously in the literature review, that tourism in Egypt is a very important aspect to the country’s economy, because it represents around 26% of it GPD.

Egypt is a very beautiful country; it has been a tourist destination since the presidential era of Anwar Al-Sadat, and it continued to be a famous tourist destination world wide. People go to Egypt to visit the Pyramids, the Egyptian Museum, Luxor and the coastal cities of Egypt, as they have beautiful beaches and wonderful weather all year round.

On the other hand, terrorism in Egypt has a huge effect on tourist arrival number to the country. Terrorism had started in 1970’s when first Al-Gama’a Al-Islamiya group was formed, but it was more active in 1992 when they first started attacking tourist all around Egypt, especially in tourist destination and attractions such as in Kahan Al-Kalili Souq, Luxor and beach resorts.

They have killed many of their foreigner tourists; they had killed the first

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British Woman in 1992, moreover in 1996 they killed around 18 Greek, along with 58 other tourist where killed a month latter and this was an extremely terrible shocking news when it has been announced all over the world by the media.

From the writer's point of view although of Egypt's bad reputation and enormous terrorist attacks that they had especially targeting tourists, tourism in Egypt had never stopped although they had their bad phase when the tourist arrival enormously dropped, however people still visited Egypt because they know that it's a beautiful country and these attacks do not represent the country as a whole, it just represented a group of political oriented people. People still visit the country and for some years it recovered from the affect of these attacks, but it has never recovered completely . Egypt's tourism had its ups and downs and the country had tried and is still trying to recover from these attacks. They are working on keeping Egypt a famous and attractive tourist destination.

From the writer's point of view, tourism has been the terrorist group's main target, and they want to send their message to the world, as a result they have achieved it all the way through the media coverage that they get during every negative event. Media has a big influence on tourist decision making either negatively or positively. Moreover tourists are always looking for a holiday that will give them peace, secure and safety and Egypt doesn't provide that to its tourists.

Safety and security is a very important aspects in any destination, tourist want to feel that they are in a secured and a safe country in order that they



could relax and enjoy their holiday. For this reason, it is important that the government rebuilds the confidence in its target tourist market and provide them with a secure and a safe holiday that they are looking for.

Terrorism war in Egypt started more than 12 years ago and it is still continuing and it will continue for more years to come if the Egyptian government doesn't do anything that will help to stop terrorism and find a solution that both parties (Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya group and the Egyptian government) will agree on.

From the writer's point of view, the Egyptian government doesn't seem doing or working very hard in order to fix the situation in the country, in addition, the government should react fast to such situations, because terrorism never stops, it grows and spread very fast every day especially in a country like Egypt.

When these terrorist groups will notice that there is no reaction from the government and as a result more attacks will be made by the groups and damage will be done to the country.

The Egyptian government should initially consider the economy of the country and how its affecting the GPD of the country, followed by the country's citizens who are also negatively affected from these terrorist attacks mainly that most businesses are locally owned and these businesses lose after any attack, especially if it is a tourism base business such as: the Airlines, hotels and souvenirs shops.

Moreover terrorism destroys the feel of security of the locals in their own country. The government should fight for the security of the citizens and provide them with their rights.

The Egyptian government should look after their citizens because they are also affected from these attacks. They should be more responsible to the people and provide a safe and more secured country to them.

To demonstrate how important and affected the tourism industry could be by terrorism the following charts explains it all.

Figure 1. 0 (Andersen, 2000).

To begin with, the first chart shows how tourist arrivals have increased from 1993 till the end of 1997 when then again enormously dropped in 1998 because of Luxor attack in 1997. This shows how tourism is significantly affected by any terrorism attack, and how it is important that the government should try to stop these attacks because it is affecting the country's economic.

Figure 2. 0 (Andersen, 2000).

Furthermore the second graph show how unpredictable tourism is in Egypt and any attack could affect the occupancy of the hotels. There are some years such as in 1997 and 1999, tourism is very high and active and in the next year it falls enormously and this is all because of terrorist attacks. In fact these attacks could be affecting the country on monthly bases rather than yearly.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

To conclude, this study has discussed the impact of terrorism on tourism in the case study of Egypt.

Egypt is one of the famous tourist destinations in the world; it attracts millions of tourists every year to the country. Egypt GPD is dependent on tourism as an income, it represents around 26% of the country GPD therefore it is important for the government to make their country a safe and a secure destination for the locals and the tourists, but terrorism is one of the factors that is destroying tourism in the country.

Terrorism in Egypt has a long history, it started in the late 1970's and stopped for a while and back once more very strongly in 1992, while this time they have been attacking tourists and getting media attention world widely. Egypt main terrorist group is called Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya; they are a group of Muslim, who wants the government to make the Shari'a Law the main government law. So these terrorist are fighting politics. And their main targets are always set on to tourists, especially foreigner tourists, although many of their attacks have killed local Egyptian people. However they always tend to attack tourist destination and attraction in Egypt, such as the Luxor and Khan Al-Kalili Cairo's old Souk and many other places.

Terrorist always intend to get media coverage and this makes them on the spotlight in any event world widely, and this is what they want to.

Terrorist have different kind of attacks that they perform, such as: Hijacking, Kidnapping, and Suicide bombing and several other performances.

Egypt has been attacked by terrorist for many years, and every time they try to recover from the attack they get attacked again, and they always have to start from the beginning to recover the consequences of the attack.

In this study the writer had suggested sever ways that the government could try to end these attack in the country, such as negotiating, build a relationship with the terrorist group in order to understand them, prevent tourist travelling in a very big groups and turning away the media attention from them, these are however only few from many other recommendations that the government could do to prevent terrorism in the country.

Because of time, the writer has not done a primary research in this study, the writer only used secondary research, and therefore more research is needed to be done to examine other factors that are responsible of these attacks, such as: How do the locals feel about these attacks? How has it affected them? and in which ways?, and the second point will be from the tourist point of view, how will they feel if they where in Egypt in a specific attack?, and will they come back to Egypt after they have seen or listened about a terrorist attack that happened in Egypt even though they have planned to go before the attack happen?, why will terrorism affect their decision making process, how is media important and how does it affect the countries reputation, so many things that could be discussed further more in the study.

There are several ways that the Egyptian government could fight against terrorism in the country; here are some of the recommendations or the ways that would be effective in fighting against terrorism:

Egypt tourism authority should take more responsibility of these attacks and also try to explain to the tour operators that they should prevent group tours and gathering, because terrorist always targets big groups, because their aim is to kill as much as they can in every attack they do.

They also should try to prevent the media attention that these attacks get from the international media, because these media coverage's has a big affect on tourist decision making when they want to travel, and tourist always intend to go away from a country that has political violence, and they always look for alternatives for that specific country. In addition there are several countries that could be replaced to Egypt such as: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

Egypt government should put together with the tourism authority a new marketing campaign to the destination; they should build a new target market to the destination, and develop new projects.

The government should build an international relation with the countries that they lost because of terrorism and try to compose a stronger relationship. Because these terrorist attacks does not represent the country, but it represent a group of people only, the people who are against the government and their laws.

These are only few recommendations that the government could carry out to prevent or to decrease these terrorist attacks in the destination.