Understanding the Nexus Between Terrorism and Tourism

Special Report
Prepared by the ST, PT and OTRB ISACs
December 3, 2015
Purpose

The Surface Transportation (ST), Public Transportation (PT), and Over the Road Bus (OTRB) Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) are providing this Special Report for your general security awareness.

Utilization of any standards or guidance discussed herein is strictly voluntary. The practices implemented by rail, transit, and OTRB systems may be either more, or less restrictive than any recommended practices or guidance given in this document. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of public transit systems’ operations. In those cases, government regulations should take precedence over the information or guidance provided herein. Organizations should consult their own agency’s/organization’s policies and guidance before taking any actions based on the information presented in this Special Report.

This Special Report supplements guidance and analysis already provided in daily reports produced by the ST, PT, & OTRB ISACs. Of note, the last page of this report lists references for additional information on the subject of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

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Introduction

The terrorist threat currently confronting governments, their critical infrastructures and citizens are wide ranging and can encompass a seemingly endless list of targets and events. As a result, the threat posed today by terrorists is more diversified, and contemporary terrorist organizations enjoy a more wide-ranging geographical reach than ever before. After centuries of evolution, the tactic of terrorism is becoming the predominant method used to target well-established nations and their interests at home and abroad.

Terrorism is designed to affect a much larger group of people than the intended victims of the attack itself. Attacks on elements of the tourism industry tend to generate a significant amount of media coverage, which magnifies the general fear and panic caused by the attack itself and can amplify the secondary and tertiary impact of a particular terrorist event; damaging economies, straining international relations, and often promoting potentially counterproductive reactionary behavior. For these reasons tourism has become a preferred target of terrorist attacks.

This report examines the persistent terrorist threat to various elements of the tourism industry; discusses today’s terrorist environment and addresses the rationale for and potential impact of attacks against elements of the tourism industry; which includes various transportation assets. In doing so it will help modern companies, security forces, and policy makers better understand the contemporary threat posed by terrorists, and other countries, and enable a better evaluation of counter measures.

The Contemporary Terrorist Threat Environment

The terrorist attacks in New York City, NY and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001, and subsequent transnational mass casualty attacks in Europe and elsewhere, led to an expansive multi-national counterterrorism campaign led by the U.S. Government to reduce the threat posed by highly capable transnational terrorist organizations actively plotting sophisticated large-scale terrorist attacks from safe havens abroad. The success of that campaign in thwarting numerous similar large-scale attacks in the West led to a significant shift in the way transnational terrorist organizations, such as the al Qaeda network, and later the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), approached the radicalization, recruitment, training, and mobilization of their supporters. No longer able to reliably deploy terrorist operatives to strike Western nations from safe havens in the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa, terrorist leaders began pursuing alternatives.

Through the aggressive use of modern technology, including the internet, terrorist leaders sought to supplement their own transnational efforts with the independent actions of others by encouraging like-minded regional and national groups and individual supporters to rise up and
launch independent attacks. Terrorist organizations abroad are also increasingly targeting foreign interests and individuals within their own spheres.

Still, the coordinated attacks on November 13, 2015, in Paris, France, indicate foreign terrorist organizations continue to plan transnational attacks against Western interests’. Although the security environment terrorists find themselves operating in today is drastically different than the one Osama Bin Laden’s al Qaeda-core successfully exploited on 9/11; Islamist terrorist organizations are successfully recruiting tens of thousands of foreign-fighters from more than half the countries in the world and ISIL, in particular, is amassing the financial and military resources typically only enjoyed by small-to-mid-sized nations. While the majority of the attacks and failed terrorist plots targeting the Western nations since 9/11 involved Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs), terrorist movements are not restrained by national borders. Reinforced by the evolving terrorist environment in the Middle East and Africa, return of “foreign fighters”, and waves of Middle Eastern refugees into Western countries, the transnational terrorist threat may be growing. Recent statements by prominent terrorist leaders suggest a multi-pronged strategy driven by their desire to strike Western interests using all available means. This strategy includes inspiring those living in Western countries to act on their behalf, targeting Western interests and foreign travelers abroad, and expanding their ability to successfully project violence directly over increasingly longer distances.

Tourism Explained

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourists as people who: “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.” The industry includes internal, inbound, and outbound travelers and involves many different components and interrelated parts, including transportation, accommodation, attractions, activities, marketing, and government regulation. Many tourism-specific businesses span more than one sector and disruption to an aspect of the industry can have broader implications for other sectors, as well as the overall health of an entire economy. The tourism industry includes:

- Sectors that enable tourists to travel to and from their destination, including travel agents, airlines, bus companies, tour operators, and rental car companies
- Sectors which are part of the product at the destination, including accommodation, facilities and attractions
- The human component of tourism, including the labor force
- Public sector or government agencies, regional tourism organizations, professional associations, and industry training organizations
Nearly every country in the world maintains a national body responsible for developing and promoting tourism. The major reasons for government involvement in tourism are concern for the welfare of their citizens and the overall welfare of their country. Tourism is closely related to economic stability, protection of natural resources, national security, public health, and employment. Tourism activity can involve all of these areas. As a result, governments are concerned that it is regulated, directed, and appropriately protected.

The Beginning of an Era and the Foundational Model

Many analysts contend the beginning of modern international terrorism began with the hijacking of an Israeli El Al commercial flight headed to Rome from Tel Aviv on July 22, 1968, by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) splinter group. For the first time, hijacking an airliner was used to make a political statement. Perhaps most importantly, this attack demonstrated that a terrorist organization could achieve results by creating a major media spectacle through the combination of symbolic targeting, dramatic statements, and fear induced recognition. For the first time, terrorists began to target civilians that were from states removed from their crisis and travel to other countries to coordinate attacks. The recognition of the media exposure and broad impact derived by targeting foreign citizens traveling abroad was later reinforced by the Palestinian attack on the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, in 1972. The Munich attack left 11 dead, and affected a global audience of approximately 800 million viewers. Several attacks like those against the aviation industry and the Munich Olympic Games made clear the powerful impact that could result from targeting tourism with terrorism.

By the mid-1980’s, the powerful effects of terrorist attacks on tourists were apparent. On October 7, 1985, four men representing the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), a successor organization to the PFLP, hijacked the Italian MS Achille Lauro cruise liner off the coast of Egypt, as she sailed from Alexandria to Ashdod, Israel. The hijackers took more than 400 passengers and crew hostage. After demands that Israel release 50 Palestinians prisoners went unmet, the group murdered a disabled Jewish-American passenger. It also became clear that, similar to other forms of political instability, terrorism could affect the tourism, even when the targets of terrorist attacks were not travelers or elements of the tourism industry. For example, the United Kingdom (UK) experienced a sharp decline in tourism in London as a result of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombing of government targets in England. Though the impact was short-lived, there was also a significant drop in tourism following the terrorist bombing of the commercial airliner Pan Am Flight 103 from Frankfurt to Detroit, via London and New York on December 21, 1988, which killed all 243 passengers and 16 crew on board.

A series of attacks targeting the tourism industry occurred in the decades that followed, including the detonation of a bomb near the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square that killed four in 1993 and the kidnapping of a group of tourists, which included two Britons in Kashmir in 1995. In
1997, 58 tourists were gunned down at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt. In 1998, Rwandan Hutu rebels killed eight tourists after kidnapping their group as they traveled through the Uganda Forest. The rebels reportedly targeted the Westerners in the group, ultimately killing four Britons, two Americans, and two New Zealanders. The Basque separatist Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) planted bombs on Spanish beaches in 2002 and 2008. In 2011, terrorists detonated a bomb near the Turkish resort of Kemer and attackers allegedly associated with al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) left a bomb near a café in a popular tourist hotspot in Marrakesh, Morocco, killing 17 people, many of whom belonged to a group of French students. In 2012, a suicide bomber detonated his device on a passenger bus transporting Israeli tourists at the airport in Burgas, Bulgaria.

These attacks, as well as others, demonstrated a foundational model for terrorists to follow. This model is premised on the notion that the deliberate targeting of various elements of the tourism industry, including travelers and transportation networks, can generate greater publicity, expand their audience, amplify the ancillary effects of their attacks, disrupt economies, foment political instability, and undermine the legitimacy of governing authorities. Historical examples indicate that tourists will modify their behavior in response to perceptions of political instability, threats, and actual terrorist attacks. Though neighboring countries can benefit if tourists perceive them as safer alternatives, individual acts of terrorism can affect both regional and global travel. As in many of the examples listed above, the terrorist attacks on New York City, New York, and Washington DC, on September 11, 2001, had an immediate impact on global travel. Following the attacks, the United States experienced a swift drop in international arrivals and witnessed a shift away from air travel, as well as an avoidance of travel to particular destinations over safety concerns. Though global travel rebounded in subsequent years, the 9/11 attacks highlighted the potential disruption that terrorism can cause. When attacks occur in nations and regions with less robust economies, or in places highly reliant on tourism, the effects can be particularly damaging.

Case Studies: Terrorism and Tourism

Bali Bombings

On October 12, 2002, three bombs detonated at the Sari nightclub and Paddy’s Bar in tourist district of Kuta and the American Consulate in Denpasar in on the Indonesian island of Bali. The attacks, later attributed to the Islamist terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah, killed 202 people from at least 22 different nations; including Australia, the United States, and several European nations. During questioning, one of the assailants revealed they selected Kuta as a target because of the prevalence of foreigners. An audio recording allegedly from Osama Bin Laden stated the bombings were in direct retaliation for support of the United States' war on terror and Australia's role in the liberation of East Timor. The island was attacked for a second time on October 1, 2005, when terrorists attacked cafes along Jimbaran Bay south of Bali’s international airport and
Kuta; killing 20. Though the bombers killed fewer people in the second attack, the bombs were reportedly more advanced. The bombings in Bali represented not only the largest act of terrorism in Indonesian history, but also one of the largest attacks on a tourist resort in the region.

Although Thailand suffered attacks on nightclubs and other entertainment venues, it has not experienced the same level of terrorist violence as other Southeast Asian countries. Aside from an incident in the 1980s in which a bomb on a bus headed from neighboring Java exploded before it reached Bali, prior to the bombings, the Island was one of the safest in the region. For the better part of four decades, Bali remained largely untouched by the rioting and bombings experienced elsewhere in Indonesia. The relative calm allowed Bali to cultivate a reputation as an attractive tourist destination with a global profile. That status may have also made it a more attractive target for terrorists. Evidence uncovered after the attacks suggests the terrorists were aware that an attack on Bali was likely to generate a high level of international media attention; particularly give the presence of Western tourists and interests. Furthermore, the deaths of foreign nationals would also generate external publicity the government could not suppress. After the 2005 Bali attack police found a document called the “Bali Project”. The document began with the question “Why Bali?”. To which, the document reportedly said: “Because it is the attack that will have global impact. Bali is famous all over the world, even more famous than Indonesia. The attack in Bali will be covered by international media and the world will get the message that the attack is dedicated to America and its allies”.

In response to the widespread strife, security measures were also already being tightened in many areas to protect embassies and government institutions. As a result, tourist resorts and other visitor facilities in Bali were by comparison much softer targets. The tourists themselves were difficult to protect without curtailing their freedom; which in turn would erode Bali’s reputation as a tourist destination.

These bombings had a significant impact on Bali’s economy. The tourism sector in Bali reportedly contributed 59.95 per cent of provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2000. That number fell to 47.42 per cent in 2002. However, due in large part to Bali’s tourist appeal and few other security-related incidents, by 2005, tourism in Bali rebounded. After the 2002 bombings, multinational investigations and international support helped speed up the recovery by restoring Bali’s image as a safe destination. But after the 2005 bombing less help from the international community was evident, there was a growing perception it was a less safe environment. Though progress was temporarily interrupted when the second attack occurred, precipitating a significant drop in tourism again in 2006, those numbers did recover. After years of calm, statistics suggest tourism levels continue to rise in spite of the past incidents of terrorism.
Terrorism In Kenya

Despite the instability present in other areas in Africa, the beaches and warm waters of Mombasa, Kenya and other resort towns along the coast attracted western holidaymakers for decades. Following the attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2013, and a series of subsequent attacks by Islamist militants loyal to the Somali-based al Shabaab, Kenya’s tourism industry slumped dramatically. The terrorist raids included one in Mpeketoni, near the coastal resort town of Lamu, in which at least 60 people died. More than 500 people have been killed in terrorist incidents in Kenya since Westgate, according to Bath, U.K.-based risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft. The $1-billion-a-year industry is struggling to recover.

Tourism is Kenya’s second-biggest generator of foreign exchange after tea exports and the decline in revenue has undermined the shilling, which, as of August 2015, had dropped 14 percent against the dollar this year alone. Kenyan companies that rely on tourism are losing money. “Business is still very low,” Tuva Mwahunga, general manager of the Serena Beach Hotel in Mombasa owned by TPS Eastern Africa Ltd., the region’s biggest hotel chain, said in an interview August 10, 2015. “We’re at 26 percent occupancy. With this we can’t continue. We’ve had to stop contractors and part-time staff.” Some hotels, such as the Twiga Beach resort in Malindi, 120 kilometers north of Mombasa, have closed.

In July 2015, Kenya Airways Ltd., sub-Saharan Africa’s third-biggest carrier, reported the country’s biggest ever corporate loss of 25.7 billion shillings ($248 million) in the year through March. The number of foreign visitors to the country dropped 19 percent in the first half of 2015, falling to 347,398, according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics data.

The government offered tax incentives to encourage local tourists and hired London-based public relations company Grayling UK Ltd. to help improve the country’s international image. Though tourism is slowly recovering and the incentives provided a respite to some companies, occupancy remains poor. According to James Owiti, the General Manager of the Severin Sea Lodge resort in Bamburi, Kenya, occupancy in August is about 40 percent. “It’s actually better than last year,” Owiti argued, saying “it was so bad last year because not just the international tourists but the local residents were afraid to come to the coast.”

This is not the first slump in tourism following bouts of violence and instability in Kenya. In 2008, 1.1 million fewer tourists visited Kenya than the previous year after violence spurred by a disputed Presidential election killed more than 1,100 people. While the easing of travel advisories by Western countries will help revive the number of visitors, it’s going to take time.

Tunisia Museum Attack and Tunisian Beach Resort Attack

On March 18, 2015, three terrorists attacked the Bardo National Museum in Tunis, Tunisia, seizing hostages. Altogether, twenty-two people, primarily European cruise ship passengers,
were killed and approximately 50 others injured. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility and threatened future attacks; however, the Tunisian government officially blamed the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade, a local splinter group of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Approximately three months later, on June 26, 2015, a gunman on the beach at Sousse, Tunisia killed 38 sunbathers. Of the victims killed, 30 were British. It was the deadliest non-state attack in the history of modern Tunisia.

According to Tunisia’s tourism minister, Salma Loumi, the number of foreign tourists in Tunisia dropped by 20 percent following these two Islamist attacks, which killed dozens of Western visitors. Before the second attack in June, tourism was already damaged. Tourism figures for April, the month following the Bardo museum attack, fell 25% when compared to April 2014. According to Tunisia’s central bank, tourism revenue dropped 26.3%. Authorities heightened security around tourist sites and high-profile locations in the capital, but foreign tourists already in the country fled. Hotels closed and foreign tour groups canceled Tunisian routes, cruises, and packages. Tour operators TUI and Thomas Cook shelved their Tunisia programs from Britain until 2106, while tour operators across Europe shifted some capacity to destinations such as Spain. The Spanish hotel chain Riu, part of German holiday group TUI, also announced it was reviewing its presence in Tunisia. "Three of the hotels we manage will be closed over the winter months and we need to talk to the owners of the other hotels we manage there to see what we can do," said a spokeswoman for Riu, which runs 10 hotels in Tunisia. Britain is advising tourists against travel to the country.

Though Tunisia is reportedly initiating reforms, including improving the quality of services and diversifying tourism options, it was already forced to cut its economic growth forecast substantially. While improved security and a more diversified economy will help the nation rebound, the effects could be devastating for the tiny North African nation. Tunisia’s economy was already harmed by the Arab Spring in 2011. British visitors to Tunisia dropped from 423,000 in 2010 to 360,000 in 2011, but looked to be rebounding until these attacks occurred. Furthermore, Tunisia’s location in North Africa, places it in the heart of a region increasingly maligned by conflict and viewed by many as synonymous with terrorism. The affordability of travel to Tunisia combined with the perception that it was an oasis of sorts in a region beset by violence helped Tunisia build its image as tourist destination for Westerners. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to Tunisia's GDP was expected to grow by 3.6% a year until 2024, according to a report published last year before these attacks occurred by the World Travel and Tourism Council.

**Erawan Shrine Bombing In Bangkok**

Despite a history of coups and a decade of instability, the attack on the Erawan Shrine in Bangkok, Thailand on August 17, 2015, was unprecedented for the capital city. The blast hit one of Bangkok's most popular commercial hubs, ripping through a crowd of worshippers at the
Erawan shrine, a popular tourist site close to five-star hotels and upscale shopping malls. At least 14 of the 20 people killed in the attack were foreign visitors. A second, albeit failed bombing at the Sathorn pier only deepened concerns.

Although Thailand's tourism industry rebounded following previous stints of political unrest, the bomb attack, which targeted foreign visitors in the heart of Bangkok, sparked concerns this incident, could prove more damaging. The attack followed reports indicating the economy already slowed in the second quarter. According to Santitarn Sathirathai, a Singapore-based economist at Credit Suisse Group AG, “Tourism is the last fully functioning engine of economic growth in Thailand.” The tourism industry accounts for approximately 10 percent of Thailand's GDP.

The bombing did have an immediate impact. While the country welcomed 2.1 million visitors between August 1 and August 23, a 31.7 percent increase from the same period in 2014, tourist arrivals fell from 85,000 a day to 70,000 the week after the bombing. Data from ForwardKeys, which tracks over 14 million travel bookings a day, indicated bookings to Thailand dropped 65 percent and business travel from China plummeted 350 percent for the five days after the bombing when compared to the same period in 2014. The overall impact of the attacks remains to be seen.

**Terrorist Violence In Egypt**

Egypt may provide the most comprehensive case study for both the damaging effects of terrorism and instability to tourism and the economy and the possibilities for recovery. Launching attacks against Egypt’s tourist sector is relatively common for jihadists in the Sinai Peninsula. Wilayat Sinai and its predecessors have a long history of attacking tourist targets. In 1997, an attack that most attribute to the Islamist group, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya at an archeological site at Luxor killed 62 people; most of them tourists. Jamaat al-Tawhid and Jihad, an early predecessor of the current ISIL affiliate, was responsible for dual suicide bombings in Taba and Ras al Satan that killed 34 people in October 2004; a quadruple vehicle bomb attack at a resort in Sharm el-Sheikh killed at least 63 in July 2005; and a multiple-bomb attack in Dahab that killed 23 in April 2006.

A successor to Jamaat al-Tawhid and Jihad and predecessor to Wilayat Sinia, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, conducted a suicide bombing against a tourist bus in Taba in February 2014 and launched several attacks against Israelis near the Egypt-Israel border before pledging allegiance to the Islamic State in October 2014 and renaming itself Wilayat Sinai. In June 2015, a drive-by shooting killed two policemen near the famed Giza Pyramids near Cairo and one week later a suicide bomber detonated a device near the ancient Egyptian temple of Karnak in Luxor, a southern city visited by millions of tourists every year.
Though the previous impacts of bouts of violence and stability were often quickly overcome, in part because of the draw of Egypt’s many highly-iconic sites, the prolonged and extensive upheaval in recent years is causing persistent difficulties. In its 2014 tourism market report, the Association of British Travel Agents found the popularity of a “number of popular holiday destinations were affected by political, social and economic unrest”. “The most prominent of these,” the report argues, “was Egypt, which started the year [2013] with high visitor numbers but suffered a significant drop-off due to political unrest leading to changes to Foreign Office advice for UK citizens”. Egypt, that already experienced several years of political unrest, saw an average annual decline in UK visitor numbers of 18.5% from 2010 to 2014, according to the Office for National Statistics. In 2014, 9.9 million tourists visited Egypt, significantly less than the 14.7 million who visited the year before Arab uprisings in the Middle East. Even still, there were signs the nation was beginning to rebound in 2015. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism still directly accounts for around 6 percent of Egypt’s economy and supports more than 1.3 million jobs.

Few recent incidents illustrate more clearly the immediate difficulty that even a suspected terrorist incident can cause to a nation’s tourism sector and economy than the bombing of MetroJet Flight 9268 over the Sinai Peninsula on October 31, 2015. The Sinai affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Wilayat Sinai, claimed the now confirmed terrorist bombing. Yet, before terrorism was officially confirmed to be the cause of the crash, which killed all 224 passengers and crew aboard, the incident dealt a significant blow to an Egyptian tourism industry already reeling from the effects of political instability. Magnifying the impact, the crash occurred at the start of the travel season. Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt, where the flight originated, accounts for about 70 percent of visits by Britons, a major tourism market for Egypt. Sharm el Sheikh, is an area filled with lavish resorts and considered by many to be a relative safe haven in the region. Yet, thousands of Russian and British tourists left within days of the incident, and the United Kingdom, Russia, and several other European countries suspended future flights into Sharm el-Sheikh indefinitely. The impact on the local tourism industry, and by extension the overall Egyptian economy, could still be substantial. British and Russian tourists account for two-thirds of visitors to Sharm el-Sheikh. Estimates suggest a boycott by both countries will cost local businesses an estimated £185 million a month. To compensate for projected losses, local businesses and hotels are already downsizing their staff. Should more attacks occur in the near future, it could further undermine the economy and the Egyptian government.

Conclusions

There is a long history of attacks on tourism and travelers. It has been nearly 50 years since the PLFP attack on the El Al Flight, and 30 years since the Palestinian Liberation Front hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise liner and the suicide grenade and gun attacks by the Abu Nidal group at
Rome and Vienna airports. Events since these attacks occurred also demonstrate that threats to various aspects of the tourism industry can transcend ideology, capability, or scope of a particular terrorist organization.

Whether attacks are conducted by transnational extremist organizations, affiliates, independent groups, or like-minded individuals, the most often sought terrorist targets are those that possess significant symbolic value, are difficult to secure or otherwise less-protected, and/or increase the potential lethality or magnify the impact of an attack. Various elements of the tourism industry potentially meet all of those criteria. Stadiums, museums, theatres, cultural centers, resorts, transportation hubs, and archaeological sites can have significant symbolic value. Striking historically critical sites with devastating attacks can not only erode the draw of tourism to a nation in the short-term, but deliver permanent damage by destroying iconic sites that attract foreign interest.

There is often less local backlash when foreign nationals are the focus of an attack. Terrorist attacks against tourist targets often guarantees greater media attention and if foreigners are among those impacted, the violence is less likely to be overlooked internationally. The death of foreign nationals generates external media coverage that more repressive regimes cannot control. Finally, tourist sites are often less-well protected. It can be difficult to adequately secure tourist sites without curtailing freedoms that might erode the image of a location as a desirable tourist destination. Tourists often cluster in large numbers, can be easily identified as foreigners, and can have more predictable patterns of behavior than local residents.

Nonetheless, a terrorist attack does not guarantee a long-term decrease in tourism; suggesting that other factors contributing to the overall perception of safety and stability in an area play a role in the impact of a particular attack. Following the London bombings of July 2005, which killed 52 people, the number of people visiting the UK did not decline, according to official statistics. There was strong growth in the number of UK nationals going to Morocco, rising from 308,000 in 2010 to 460,000 in 2014, despite the 2012 Marrakesh bombing, which killed 15 people. Overall, figures suggest that the tourism industry in countries or regions enduring long-term strife, such as Egypt and North Africa, or repeated attacks, suffer more than those affected by relatively few events or those perceived as modern and stable.

Likewise, the presence and perceived capability of security mechanisms can also affect the impact of terrorism on the tourism, ultimately affecting both the initial impact of an attack, as well as the pace at which tourism recovers. Colombia's boom in tourism in recent decades coincided with increased security and a regular army presence on major highways and tourist transportation hubs. Similarly, Mexico's drug war, which has crippled large swaths of the country, has not significantly impacted tourist zones; where cartel violence is less common.
The tourist draw of a particular locale can also have an effect. While tourists will alter their travel plans based on the perception of the safety and security associated with a particular location or mode of travel, studies suggest that if the attractiveness of a particular destination is higher than the level of risk, travelers will return more rapidly, despite the perception of a potential threat.

In the end, the total number of tourists killed by terrorists over the past several decades is relatively small when compared to the billions who travelled safely during that period. While there are some destinations where the extent of the current threat is so great that it would be foolish to risk travelling and it is imperative that nations take the steps necessary to minimize the threat of terrorism to the elements that comprise their tourism industry, history demonstrates resilience to terrorism. Despite appalling atrocities, if travelers feel secure, they are often determined to return. Nevertheless, that reality provides little comfort to the victims of a terrorist attack; which extends beyond those immediately harmed during the event. Though the system will likely recover as a whole at some point, it is of little solace to those who experience significant physical, emotional, and economic hardship as a result of terrorist attacks on tourism.

**U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**

The U.S. State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is an invaluable resource for American citizens traveling abroad. STEP is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. According to the State Department Website, “Protecting the lives and interests of U.S. citizens abroad is a core mission of U.S. Embassies and Consulates. We encourage all U.S. citizens travelling or residing overseas to notify the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate of their contact information so that, in an emergency, we can contact them to provide important safety and security information, or support during a crisis. Enrolling in STEP is an easy way to send your contact information to us online. Alternatively, you can visit the Embassy or Consulate in person to enroll, or fill out a paper enrollment form and mail it to the appropriate Embassy or Consulate, or to the Department of State.”

Consular officers at Embassies and Consulates can assist U.S. citizens who encounter serious legal, medical, or financial difficulties overseas. For example, if a passport is stolen while traveling, the U.S. Department of State can assist a U.S. citizen with obtaining a replacement so they can continue their trip. They can also provide the names of English-speaking doctors or local attorneys, provide loans to destitute U.S. citizens, and provide information about dangerous conditions affecting overseas travel or residence. In a crisis situation, such as a natural disaster or severe political instability, the Department of State often takes an active role in providing information and assistance to U.S. citizens in the affected area. The State Department also performs non-emergency services, including: helping with routine passport applications, absentee voting, selective service registration, receiving federal benefits, and filing U.S. tax
forms. Consular officers can notarize documents, issue passports, and register U.S. citizen
cchildren born abroad. Most embassies and consulates have web sites with more information
regarding their services for U.S. citizens.
Additional Resources

U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)
https://step.state.gov/step/

The Effects of Terrorism on the Travel and Tourism Industry; 2014
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11/1/2015

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Russian plane crash may halve Sharm al Sheikh's tourism income; 11/10/2015
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/10/us-egypt-crash-tourism-idUSKCN0SZ2AR20151110

Russian plane crash in Sinai: The consequences

Russian Airplane Crash Shakes Egypt’s Tourism; NY Times, 11/10/2015