



## The Mediterranean Region: between terrorism, tourism and security

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### Abstract

*Tourism remains a very vulnerable sector and sensitive to both internal and external impacts, such as economic and social crises, natural disasters, epidemics and diseases, national and international conflicts. Among these, the most alarming threat in the 21st century remains terrorism. In this sense, this paper aims to study the effects of the increasingly frequent terrorist attacks by the extremist factions of Al-Qaeda and ISIL on the tourism industry in the Mediterranean Region. The contribution, after having discussed in general the tourism market in the Mediterranean Region, intends to highlight the impacts and repercussions of the terrorist attacks on tourism, presenting the example of Egypt and one of its best-known tourist destinations, Sharm el-Sheikh. In this sense, it is shown how, in a few years, the political instability of the country and the attacks of 2005 and 2016 have significantly reduced the influx of tourists, transforming it from one of the most visited destinations in the world in a place of increasing abandonment.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, terrorism, Mediterranean Region, Egypt, Sharm el Sheikh.*

### 1. Introductory considerations

Tourism remains a very fragile sector and sensitive to both internal and external impacts, such as economic and social crises, natural disasters, epidemics and diseases, national and international conflicts. Among these, the most alarming threat in the 21st century remains terrorism. In this sense, this paper aims to study the effects of the increasingly frequent terrorist attacks on the tourism industry in the Mediterranean Region. The contribution is intended to highlight the impacts and repercussions of terrorist attacks on tourism; in order to do this, it is necessary a premise about terrorism and the geopolitical context affecting the Mediterranean Region and sub-Saharan Africa.

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ISIL and Al-Qaeda, the two main terrorist groups, known at the international level, spread terror in the name of radical Islamism and recruit foreign fighters and they organize attacks in Europe and other countries.

ISIL and Al-Qaeda have the same goals, but they diverge in strength and organization; often compete for consensus and access to resources to finance their activities. If they have one thing in common, ISIL and Al-Qaeda, it is the hostility to the West. As is well known, they would like to create a State, a Caliphate, with a single authority with religious and political power and where the " Sharia ", or Islamic law, is the only law recognised. Both are radical movements: therefore, they do not admit other interpretations, different from their own, of Islam. They want to eliminate any Western influence on the Arab world. They recruit foreign warriors, known as "foreign fighters", who are subsequently used for terrorist actions.

Both ISIL and al-Qaeda are Sunni jihadist movements. ISIL has its operational base between Syria and Iraq, in that borderland where the international coalition is trying to contain its expansion. Moreover, it is a territory rich in oil, thanks to which the ISIL draws for the financing of its activities. Al-Qaeda, on the other hand, no longer has its headquarters. After the war started by the United States, following the attacks of September 11th, its operative capacities are in the hands of a multiplicity of regional groups. Among these, Al-Shabab is its military branch between Somalia and Kenya, while the Boko-Haram has its operative area in West Africa (in particular: Niger, Mali, Northern Nigeria, Northern Cameroon, Chad).

Today the two formations compete. ISIL may seem more organized and financially more robust even if the latest events see it defeated. Al-Qaeda, also for the fact that it does not have a territory and is scattered in many small cells, is more an ideal, something symbolic. Even if, it must be pointed out, that these mini formations are its strength because they are more difficult to identify. Finally, ISIL is still able to strike massively, thanks also to a more structured military system, al-Qaeda aims more at attacks of " lonely wolves ", cells ready to be activated in every part of the world.

Terrorism attributable to these groups has caused and continues to cause many disasters and victims, instilling fear and insecurity. However, the effects caused by terrorism are many and also affect the economic, social and financial policies of the countries involved or at risk of attack. Tourism is not immune to these side effects and, on the contrary, often tourist places and tourists are key targets of terrorists.

Moreover, according to studies and research presented by the ITSTIME laboratory, between 2001 and 2016 the tourism and transport sector was hit by terrorism about 400 times, with attacks that affected more than 60 countries, in 8 different regions of the world. Leisure and holiday destinations are a primary objective that allows terrorists to obtain high media visibility and an immediate weakening of local economies, affecting the sense of security to which tourists are not accustomed and with which they have to live<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.unicatt.it/cattolicaperilturismo/turismo-sviluppo-delle-imprese-e-dei-servizi-turistici-turismo-e-terrorismo-le-nuove-sfide-in-rete>

What emerges from it goes beyond the already horrible predictions: not only dead, wounded and local people and squares to be rebuilt; it is also a market, currently very strong at a global level, that is blocked, changes in the immediate future and causes losses and disruption in dozens of industrial and economic sectors. If a destination is affected, its accommodation facilities, public transport, airports, local activities, neighbouring companies and all those who directly or indirectly benefit from the tourism phenomenon will also be affected. The increasingly affected Mediterranean Region must be able to react and respond to terrorism by finding solutions that can bounce away, at least at the psychological level, the perception of confusion, concern and violence that would lead in particular the travel sector towards decline. On the other hand, it would be useless to fight a battle against ISIL and its propaganda, using as much ferocity; Governments, in collaboration with the media, tour operators and the population itself, must find valid alternatives not to block tourism in the Mediterranean, which now hosts more than a billion international arrivals. It is, therefore, necessary to develop, disseminate and practice new tourism trends so as not to block a region at the heart of the economy, markets and travel around the world.

## **2. The concept of the Mediterranean Region**

The concept of the Mediterranean Region (Lemmi, Chieffallo, 2012) has always been the subject of attention and analysis by many authors and scholars, concluding more or less in agreement, because being able to delimit geographically is not easy. However, there is no doubt that this area contains many facets, both at a socio-cultural and historical level, but also geopolitical and environmental. Since ancient times, the Mediterranean has allowed people to travel, trade and even fight, leading to a constant exchange of cultures, creating a historical background that increases its relevance and unity. Today, this area is still affected by a bustle of commercial or tourist means and serves as an escape route for the peoples of North Africa who leave their motherland for a brighter future away from war. This bustle, provided it is constant, has undergone some changes in the last decade, precisely because of the tensions coming from the Near Middle East and the regions involved in the Arab Spring<sup>4</sup>.

The Mediterranean has always been one of the most visited regions in the world, where countries such as France, Spain and Italy stand out. To make it so special are the many elements of homogeneity that blend perfectly with those of heterogeneity, creating a mix of cultures, peoples and characteristics in which it becomes possible to identify a "Mediterranean people", just think of the fact that, only in the Mediterranean, three continents come together as well as all the various cultures, ethnic groups, ideologies that arise, but that, although close, are not considered as a

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<sup>4</sup> The Arab Spring means the revolts against the regimes that have affected the Arab world since 2010, mainly in the Middle East and North Africa. Source: <http://www.limesonline.com/tag/primavera-araba>

unitary zone. It is a very complex territory because there are numerous socio-economic, demographic and cultural imbalances, in particular between the northern and southern parts of the sea, which are increasingly accentuated as a result of the migration phenomenon and the North African uprisings. In fact, if in the northern Mediterranean we can boast an integrated, advanced and rich economy, in the south we cannot say the same, because it is more backward and unstable. However, on both shores, there has always had a good market share in tourism. The wealth of attractive elements in the Mediterranean area has always brought flows from all parts of the world, so much so that in 2012, a record year for international tourism, Europe was the country in first place for increased revenue and counted over half a billion arrivals, while North Africa and the Middle East have reached about a million presences. Even now, the positive results for international tourism are excellent and in continuous improvement: the annual report of the UNWTO for 2017, estimated 1.3 billion international arrivals, of which more than half only in Europe and the Near Middle East<sup>5</sup>.



Figure 1. International tourist arrivals in 2017. Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419807>

Positive results and continued growth are therefore being achieved despite the many obstacles, concerns and challenges that affect this area daily. The UNWTO itself is committed to ensuring that the travel sector can drive socio-economic growth, without neglecting elements such as sustainability and security.

In The UNWTO<sup>6</sup> report 2016, in fact, the organization focused on the importance of safeguarding citizens and tourists and on the impact of recent terrorist events, pressing states and governments for closer collaboration between tourism activities and the armed forces, public administration and security officers. This means that, as safe as it may seem, even the tourism sector has to do with the alert terrorism and its consequences for the society, and therefore on the economy of countries, it is important to keep up the guard, understand how it affects and how to bounce any negative impact.

### **3. The economic consequences of terrorism: the impact on infrastructure, transport and services. The case of Egypt**

Terrorism also has an impact on the economy, services and tourism. As mentioned, the civil wars in the countries of North Africa (for example, the Arab Spring), have revolutionized the political regimes and relations with the rest of the Mediterranean. This undoubtedly has an impact on trade since the area has always been an excellent outlet market and supplier of sourcing raw materials. Since the attacks are difficult to predict and prevent, the consequences are also unpredictable, since decisions regarding the economic sector, services and public administration, are immediate but not always protracted.

Following a terrorist attack, the first sectors to pay for the consequences are undoubtedly air transport, hotels and restaurants, luxury, events and demonstrations. For example, in Paris, after the attacks suffered in 2015, the large shopping centre Galeries Lafayette halved the number of visitors, in the hospitality sector the occupancy rate and room revenues fell by more than 20% during the first weekend, some meetings and activities were cancelled, others confirmed, but with reinforced controls.

In fact, one aspect that changes significantly following an attack is the security measures: the attacked government proceeds with a strengthening of the military apparatus and its distribution throughout the territory in a state of alert and in adjacent areas, to ensure greater security and protection, to avoid further attacks and to maintain high confidence among the population. These actions are linked to an inevitable increase in the controls of flows of people, goods and money: this means greater blockades at the borders and often a decrease in import-export trade, which, in the long term, could worsen the economic and financial conditions not only of the country in question but also of the commercial partners. Moreover, by having to support investments in public security, the state will have fewer sources to devote to infrastructure, activities and public bodies. In particular, roads, hospitals, real

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<sup>6</sup> Source: [http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/annual\\_report\\_2016\\_web\\_0.pdf](http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/annual_report_2016_web_0.pdf)

estate, education, are put in second place and, even if this postponement persists for a limited period, this can result in a general malfunction. This is a real knock-on effect, as less investment leads to less employment, therefore more savings and less spending by consumers and so on. Another segment that suffers the negative effects of the post-terrorist attack are urban public transport, in particular buses, trains and the metro, since they have always been at risk of being attacked because of their large number of people; in fact, as in the case of airports, cases of catastrophic events in railway or metro stations are not uncommon. Finally, the real estate market should also be taken into consideration, especially for foreign customers and especially in the affected areas, where the interest in buying drops dramatically in the immediate future, and prices must adapt to the low demand.

Secondly, as already mentioned above, air traffic and tourism are weakening significantly due to the hesitancy of the tourist concerning the place just hit, moving their preferences to other destinations or giving up the departure<sup>7</sup>.

Egypt, located on the border between the African continent and the Middle East, connected by the Sinai Peninsula, has always been a very popular tourist destination and appreciated by visitors from all over the world. The climate, the historical-archaeological-cultural heritage and the richness of the landscape have favoured the development of tourism in the country, which has been able to respond with locations ad hoc, equipped with infrastructure, facilities and skilled labour. Over the last 30 to 40 years, the Egyptian economy has undergone numerous changes, especially with the arrival in 1981 of Prime Minister Hosni Mubarak, who had the power until 2011. At the head of the country, he tried to give a more liberal imprint on economic policies, set in motion actions aimed at faster GDP growth and a decrease in inflation and the then very high public debt. More precisely, the North African country, through the export of raw and industrial materials such as oil, gas and cotton, was able to establish excellent trade relations with foreign countries and in particular with Europe, thanks to commissions, tolls and related derivatives. In reality, this would not have been possible without the help of the IMF and without the subsidies obtained following the participation in the First Gulf War, from which the country obtained economic and financial aid, without, however, avoiding repercussions: from these facilitations came less attention to social services, subsidies and discontent began to make its way, particularly in the youth class, as well as the first civil discordances and guerrillas even with a religious background. However, in the early 2000s, the Egyptian state continued its march towards a more open economic policy, ready to enter the global market. The situation seemed to be taking the right turn: GDP had increased, inflation had fallen, and Egypt had a good position on the international market (Lemmi, Chieffallo, 2010).

The growth of the nation must also and above all give credit to tourism: it is one of the driving wheels for the economy, and a large part of the monetary revenue comes from visitors from all over the world. Mubarak established the Tourism

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<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/11/24/attentati-parigi-le-conseguenze-economiche/2247985/>

Development Authority (*Ibidem*) to attract more tourists, through a wider and more diversified offer, more efficient structures and infrastructures and a greater predisposition and training by the workforce and local businesses. Thus, between the 1990s and the early 2000s, the sector saw a significant increase in terms of arrivals, presences, monetary income and tourism activities. However, already in those years, terrorism and internal tensions were often producing negative effects, going to make the Egyptian economic growth fluctuating, without, however, provoking huge losses.

The sector tended to be positive until 2010/2011, even after the fracture of 2008, so much so that arrivals have more than tripled in a decade (*Ibidem*). The country's fame can be traced back to the numerous archaeological testimonies of the culture of the ancient Egyptians along the Nile. On the banks of the river, the first civilizations developed and still a very high density characterizes the area, also because the Egyptian territory is largely occupied by the desert. Among these stands out the capital Cairo, which boasts a rich heritage of history and culture: the main attractions are the most important Egyptian museum in the world, the famous bazaars and the many churches and mosques. Close to the city, there are the archaeological sites of Saqqara, Menfi and Giza, famous throughout the world for their pyramids and the majestic Sphinx, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Another destination is Alexandria (*Ibidem*), which overlooks the Mediterranean coast and which houses the Greek-Roman Museum and the main library of the ancient world, the Alexandrina Library, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here visitors can find monuments from the ancient world: right in Alexandria stood the ancient lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the world, now deeply damaged. Other destinations that have favoured the development of tourism in the country are the temple of Luxor, the area of Abu Simbel and the numerous seaside resorts of the Red Sea, such as Sharm el-Sheikh, Hurghada and Marsa Alam.

Since the last century, Egyptian economic growth has faced numerous obstacles on its way: in the Nineties, some terrorist attacks have put a strain on security and well-being throughout Egypt, causing repercussions both for foreign relations, both within, where it fed a deep disappointment on the part of much of the youth class, contrary to Islamic fundamentalism. All this happened in a State where the economic development was not able to facilitate the recent graduates and the new graduates, going to increase the number of unemployed and the general discontent. Already at the end of the last century, the tourism sector was put to the test and had suffered: the terrorist alarm led to fewer arrivals, losses in accommodation, catering and transport. Worthy of note there are undoubtedly the attacks of 1997, when they were affected in particular tourist places and visitors<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup>On September 18, following an attack on a group of Germans in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, about ten people died; later, on November 17, in a temple near Luxor, a terrorist group killed about sixty tourists.



These terrible events have led the local economy and international arrivals to grow with a fluctuating trend and often took years to rise to the levels pre-bombed. On the other hand, the economy and tourism in Egypt have a parallel evolution, since the latter has always been one of the driving wheels of the country, creating numerous job opportunities, generating large flows of money and participating significantly in the establishment of GDP.

Until the early 2000s, the country seemed immune to terrorism, and this facilitated its growth. As already mentioned, Egypt, under the leadership of Mubarak, succeeded in acquiring a good economic position at a global level. The leader embarked on a path towards a freer and more open market, reduced barriers and facilitated the private sector, encouraging competition and encouraging new investors. Moreover, following the tragedy of Luxor, the Government took the emergency situation in Egypt seriously and decided to take measures to suppress groups of extremist and violent origin, increasing controls on groups, organizations and parties. The increased attention and prevention brought remarkable results, so much so that until 2004, there were no terrorist acts and the country benefited particularly on all fronts.

In 2008, the global economy went into crisis and affected, among others, the Egyptian state. As a result of the crisis, exports fell dramatically, and all the benefits derived from it increased unemployment and again swelled the public debt. Nevertheless, in the decade 2000-2010 tourism has continued to grow steadily, to the detriment of expectations arising from the crisis: in fact, the impact that the crisis has had on the Egyptian tourism sector, is almost zero, so that between 2008 and 2009 arrivals remained almost unchanged (in 2009 arrivals were only 300.000 less than the previous year), and what is more, already in 2010 growth resumed clearly. However, the negative effects on the Egyptian travel market were caused by extreme events: 2011, in particular, caused considerable damage throughout the country and even tourism this time had no way out. The civil uprisings in North Africa also affected Egypt, so much so that President Mubarak was forced to resign: it was undoubtedly a turning point for the local population, but the same positive effect was not reflected in the tourism sector. We can just think that in February 2011, when the revolts were more intense, there was a decrease of 80% in attendance compared to February of the previous year; in general, it has gone from almost 15 million arrivals in 2010, to even 10 million in 2011. Already in 2012, thanks to the elections of the new President Mohamed Morsi, the situation seemed to recover, and tourism began to rise, giving hope in a revival of the sector and the economy of the country. Unfortunately, Egypt's fate may have passed into the wrong hands, so much so that Morsi remained in charge only a year, the economy did not recover, and the civil clashes increased dramatically: the political instability of the country affected the population, which is violent, demonstrations and a new bogeyman of the economy.



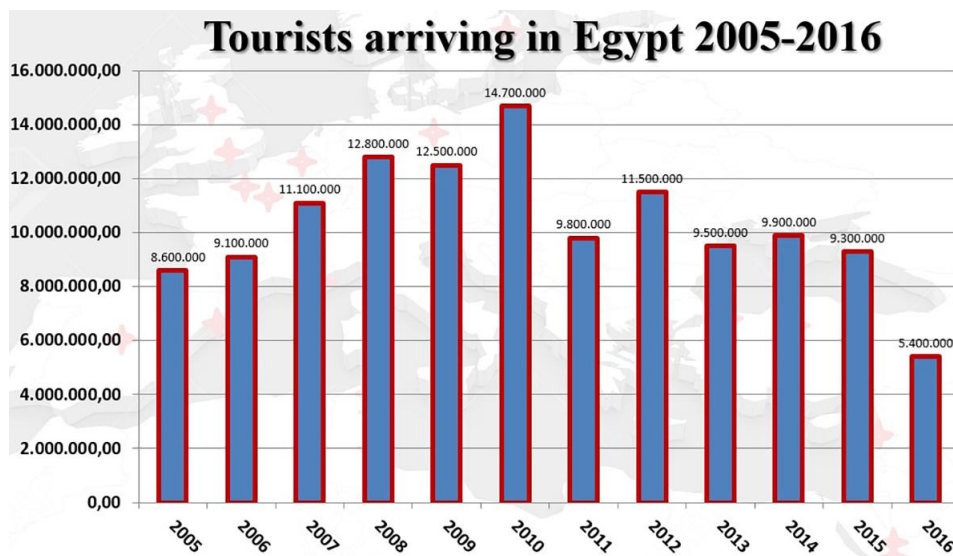


Figure 2. Tourist arriving in Egypt 2005-2016. Source: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/mondo/2016-05-20/colpo-grazia-turismo-egiziano-091919.shtml?uuid=ADbLA0L>

In fact, as can be seen from Figure 2, since 2013, the tourism sector has not undergone any significant changes, until 2016, when the arrivals fell in a dive. The disastrous budget of 2016 derives from the umpteenth terrorist events that occurred in Egypt between 2015, with the crash of the Russian Airbus in the Sinai Peninsula, identified as an attack claimed by ISIL, and the first months of 2016, with the attack by two extremists of the Islamic State in Hurghada. This climate of insecurity and disarray still remains in the country and discourages tourists and operators from choosing Egypt as a holiday destination, also because the danger is lurking, and terrorist attacks manifest themselves periodically and, in recent years, in conjunction with the arrival of ISIL, more and more frequently; this is the reason why destinations that have always been coveted are now desolate and almost cancelled from the programs of international tour operators. The resumption of Egyptian tourism seems still far away and, certainly, the terrorism emergency, together with the previous internal reversals and the tension that is felt even in neighboring nations, do not play in its favour.

#### 4. The Sharm el-Sheikh case: from a symbol of tourism to a ghost town

Over the last thirty years, the entire planet has been affected by the phenomenon of globalisation, namely social, economic and cultural integration at a global level. Among the areas that have been involved in this process, there is also tourism: technological development, the improvement of means of transport and communication, as well as greater accessibility to images and information, has brought about significant changes in the sector. Today we are moving in a context

in which needs are constantly changing, and responses need to be tailored to the needs of the consumer; this is also inevitably reflected in the travel sector. Therefore, today, the areas that can be considered as tourist destinations are increasingly, and the sector is constantly growing all over the world. As a result, there will be more places that enjoy the benefits of the tourism market, or more places that try to create an offer that meets consumer expectations, even where there are no factors of attraction or settlements, or are not sufficiently valued or accessible.

In the case of Egypt, and in particular the area facing the Red Sea, the strengths have always been the sea, the paradisiacal landscapes and the climate. The development of this area as a tourist destination began a few decades ago, with the construction of roads, airports and facilities such as hotels and resorts. In particular, at that time, segments of customers interested in diving, water sports and nature were welcomed, thanks to the more than 200 species of corals scattered throughout the sea and the countless categories of animals and tropical fish (Adamo, 2005).

The region of Sharm el-Sheikh has been able to create an offer able to attract more and more flows, even belonging to different target groups, through the creation of receptive businesses, efficient infrastructures and a web of ad hoc services. In about thirty years, we have gone from a sparsely populated area to one of the most coveted destinations in the Mediterranean. In particular, Sharm, the "Sheikh's Bay" (*Ibidem*) was born around the Seventies of the XX century, at the beginning for strategic and conflicting reasons, and then became a tourist resort. Between the 90s and 2.000s, the city expanded: focusing heavily on the need for recreation and relax, going from 1.000 to 30.000 beds, making accessible and as attractive as possible the surrounding landscape, Sharm el-Sheikh became the most popular destination for Italians and one of the main international destinations. What attracted the attention was the ability of the tour operators to make the customer feel in a dream: once they arrived in the resort, they could devote themselves completely to relaxation and self-care. Those who went to Egypt knew that it was not just a week at the beach, but there would be a network of operators and facilities dedicated, from the moment of departure at the airport, until the end of the journey back home.

The excursions, the population, the customs and the local culture, did not prevail to the comfort, the well-being and the lightheartedness. The great development that has involved the region of Sharm el-Sheikh has undoubtedly created many positive effects for the whole country, but it has also led from the beginning to some problems common to many economically and touristically advanced realities. If tourism brings benefits in terms of revenue, GDP, induced income and financial and social well-being, on the other hand, it can cause damage to the culture, the environment and the local population, to which we must constantly pay attention, especially if it is already fragile and penalized territories and realities previously. In particular, on the Red Sea coast, the environment plays a central role, since the tourist phenomenon is based on factors of attraction such as beaches and the landscape. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the territory and to safeguard it in order to keep intact its peculiarity, as well as its high attractiveness towards

tourists. However, if the local government in itself has had to focus perpetually on policies aimed at strengthening and safeguarding the area, from the late 90s of the XX century to the present day, to affect the balance, security and economic development were the organizations of Islamic extremists and their attacks. The 1997 attack on Luxor had already caused havoc in Egypt, but the government had been able to react, as had the population, tourism and the economy. However, it was on July 23, 2005, that the fate of Sharm el Sheikh<sup>9</sup> began to strongly shake-up: due to a series of kamikaze attacks in different areas of the town, full of tourists, then claimed by the terrorist organization of Al Qaeda, almost 100 people died, and the consequences conditioned the tourist market in a clear way. Already in the first hours after the attack, many tourists renounced to leave for the region on the Red Sea, some airlines suspended all routes with arrival in Sharm and travel agencies were advised to cancel the trips.<sup>10</sup> This certainly did not bring a halt to tourism in the area, but certainly slowed down its growth and laid the foundations for a crumbling of the security perceived on the ground. However, 2015 marked the beginning of the current situation of decline in which the renowned tourist destination is concerned: the plane that crashed in the area of the Sinai Peninsula has created even more excitement, also because the ISIL does not seem to stop in Egypt as in the rest of the Mediterranean destinations. Flights have been cancelled again, and travel agencies and tour operators have moved to find alternative solutions. Safety is one of the most important aspects to be taken into account during the phase of choosing the trip and, if it fails, they are the first to move to find offers that better meet the needs of tourists, especially when moved by desires for recreation, relaxation and tranquillity. From 2015 to 2016 international arrivals to Egypt have in fact decreased by more than 40% and even for this year, there do not seem to have been very positive aspects. Although local operators try to promote the area and try to attract new flows, the propaganda of ISIL remains more intense and impacts more on the minds of consumers, who consider alternative tourist products. The town of Sharm today sees its streets, beaches and surrounding beauties in a state tending to abandon and that seems to find no way to deflect the media fury and violence of ISIL and Islamic extremists against the western world and its holidays.

## **5. A recent case against the trend: Paris**

Research by the World Tourism Trade Council (WTTC) has shown that the impact of attacks in Western countries is significantly shorter than in other countries, for example, France with Paris.

In 2018, the recovery of international tourism in Paris was the basis of the results after the terrorist threat that, in recent years, had helped to reduce by 30% the number of foreign tourists.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: <http://cultura.biografieonline.it/sharm-el-sheikh-bombe-2005/>

<sup>10</sup> Source: <http://cultura.biografieonline.it/sharm-el-sheikh-bombe-2005/>

A very positive year for the French capital with an increase in visitors to the museums and main monuments of the French capital in the wake of the performance recorded by the Louvre which marked a record number of admissions, welcoming about 10.2 million visitors. The number of visitors to the main Parisian museum increased by 25% compared to 2017<sup>11</sup>.

The statistics referring to the data on the tourist affluence to the main cultural attractions of the city are positive.

Château de Versailles, despite closure of about two weeks, recorded 8 million visitors growing by 6%, of which 79% foreigners mostly Americans and Chinese. The Arc de Triomphe in 2018 saw 1.7 million visitors, although the monument remained closed periodically because of the manifestations of yellow jackets. The Notre-Dame Cathedral welcomed 1.2 million tourists with a 40% increase while for the Pantheon the increase was 19% (859,600 visits), the Sainte-Chapelle, with 1.27 million visits (+ 19.81%) was an unexpected success. These monuments are managed by the Centre des Monuments Nationaux (CMN)<sup>12</sup> which stated that it had exceeded, for the first time in its history, the 10 million admissions in Paris and France, of which 1.4 million for Mont-Saint-Michel, the most visited site outside the region of Paris (CMN, Tourism Report, 2019)

With 3.5 million visitors, the Centre Pompidou reported a 5% increase in its number of visitors in 2018 compared to 2017. At the Grand Palais, 1.1 million people viewed the exhibitions dedicated to Gauguin and Michael Jackson. The Musée du Luxembourg, which is managed by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux (NMR), registered an increase of 42% to 423,000 visitors.

The Musée d'Orsay welcomed 3.2 million visitors (+3%) and the exhibition "Picasso, Blue and Pink" ended with a record number of visitors (670,667). As far as the Quai Branly-Jacques Chiracha museum is concerned, there was an increase in attendance of 7% compared to 2017 to more than 1.2 million people.

The Paris-Musées network (Musées de la Ville de Paris) welcomed 3 million visitors in a context of ambitious renovation and the Catacombes de Paris, with a new entrance, welcomed 480,000 visitors. Among the best results was the Petit Palais, with 1.2 million visitors, thanks to a very extensive programme of thematic exhibitions. The Musée de l'Armée aux Invalides, with 1.2 million (+ 2.7%) is confirmed among the most visited museums with an increase of 5% in attendance

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<sup>11</sup> A view by geographical area of visitors shows that foreigners accounted for almost three-quarters of the visitors although the French remain the main nationality (2.5 million, or 25% of the total).

<sup>12</sup>It is the French system that administers almost 100 national monuments belonging to the State and distributed throughout the territory: the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel, the castles of Angers and Azay-le-Rideau, the castle and the walls of the city of Carcassonne, the Arc de Triomphe and Sainte-Chapelle, to name but a few. The aim of the CMN is to make these monuments accessible to as many people as possible, under the scientific and technical control of the services of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, operations aimed at preventing their degradation and prolonging their duration.

compared to 2017. The number of permanent collections has increased by 18% compared to last year.

These data and recent information show how the desire and desire to visit France (the most visited country in the world according to the statistics of the World Tourism Organisation) and its capital by tourists has outlived the fear of terrorism that affects this European country.

Governments play a primary role because they must guarantee security as much as possible, adopting all measures of prevention and repression. It is important that these measures are communicated and perceived as a common security factor. In this sense, international agreements and regulations, including those of a regional nature, aimed at ensuring more effective controls on travel, short and long stays and arms, can help.

However, great care must be taken to ensure that excessive security policies do not upset the balance between fundamental rights, democratic bodies and police controls. Other instruments, even more effective, are those of preventive information, of which an example is the Crisis Unit of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which combines, at the site [www.viaggiasesicuri.it](http://www.viaggiasesicuri.it), information on areas at risk (for any type of danger, not only terrorism) with the possibility of communicating their position for all Italians who are abroad for any reason, in order to allow the Ministry to intervene in case of emergencies.

And finally, one of the activities to contrast this effect, and especially the loss of tourists in the short term in Europe, is to make potential visitors, especially families, reach the concept that prevailing fear is exactly the main objective of terrorism.

## **6. Final considerations**

Tourism and Terrorism are unpronounceable, though inevitable, binomial. For most people, it remains a taboo, but against the backdrop of the current global background and the fast changes terrorism continues to represent a threat and a challenge for Tourism - tourists and operators - and in general for the mobility business.

It has also been established that the fear caused by the threat of terrorism influences the planning of holidays and the choice of destinations, as well as the evaluation of the possibility of taking part in public events. In this sense, in this article, we have dealt with Egypt and, in particular, with Sharm el-Sheikh, one of its most famous tourist destinations. As for the rest, the African country has experienced tourism in alternating phases influenced and damaged by political instability, like the attacks in 2005 and 2016. Only now, in 2019, is it slowly recovering thanks to tourist packages that offer a variety of services at low cost, compared to other destinations in the world.

The relationship between tourism and terrorism is a strand of tourism studies that need to be depth: the reasons why tourists and tourist destinations are targeted by

terrorists and how episodes of transnational terrorism affect the perception of travellers towards destinations.

In this context, operators are called upon to put the issue of security responsibility more and more at the centre, understood as the result of a vision capable of opening up new perspectives, assuming new commitments, new duties and where elements such as awareness, competence, communication and coordination play a key priority role to direct the range of action.

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