

Crisis Communications Messaging: Safety and Security in SA | SA-Israel relationship

Dear Members,

We have taken the liberty of drafting two statements which you can use should your clients be requesting information about:

- The tourist safety and security situation in South Africa
- South Africa's stance on Israel and the impact on tourists

Please do feel free to reach out to comms@visitsouthafrica.info should you require any additional crisis communications messaging.

SAFETY AND SECURITY MESSAGE

Dear valued travel industry partners,

Given recent developments concerning international travellers, we want to reach out with reassurances around visitor safety and security in South Africa, which remains our utmost priority.

The South African Police Service has alerted us about recent kidnappings and robberies by criminals posing as officers in vehicles with blue lights. A manhunt is underway to apprehend those behind this crime. There have also been concerning incidents of police harassment of tourists.

We strongly condemn these criminal acts and want to reassure you that the private and public sector have never worked as closely and as actively as we are currently to mitigate risks.

In collaboration, we have rolled out several new safety initiatives:

- Over 2,300 Tourism Monitors have been strategically deployed in high-density tourist areas across South Africa to provide visibility, guidance, emergency assistance, and deter criminal activity.
- Enhanced security measures have been established in locations where incidents were reported, including increased police patrols equipped with improved response capabilities, state-of-the-art security camera systems with analytics, better street lighting, and more.
- Our SECURA Traveller App and 24-hour emergency response call centre offers all visitors access to request emergency services. This provides peace of mind knowing support is only a click away.
- Our Tourism Angels volunteer programme assists affected tourists with trauma counselling, translation services, transport, lodging, logistics, and other support as needed. Travellers have access to over 300 Angels who will assist in crisis response to promptly aid visitors who have experienced distressing situations.

We also urge extra vigilance around law enforcement interactions and advise the following guidelines:

- Do not stop if you suspect that you might be stopped by bogus police officers.
- Drive to the nearest police station, shopping complex or any other busy area when you are stopped by an unmarked vehicle fitted with blue lights.
- Do not stop at a deserted spot or area to talk on your phone or even relieve yourself.
- If someone tries to force you out of the road, don't panic, Rather, constantly hoot to draw attention.
- You have the right to request a police officer who is not in uniform and an unmarked vehicle to identify themselves by producing their SAPS appointment card that would have their rank, date of service and picture on them.

While risks cannot ever be fully eliminated, our goal is to ensure travellers enjoy the length and breadth of our beautiful country safely. We are continuously looking at how we can enhance tourism infrastructure, technology, processes and multi-stakeholder coordination to achieve this. You can be assured that police and tourism stakeholders are working around the clock to put a stop to these acts of criminality.

To report an incident, contact the E2 national Monitoring Control Centre Hotline on 083 318 2475.

We welcome open dialogue regarding additional measures the industry can undertake. Our vision is for all guests to continue experiencing South Africa's vibrant cities, captivating wildlife, our incredible adventure experiences and welcoming spirit while remaining safe.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any other questions - our email comms@visitsouthafrica.info.

We highly value our travel trade partners and working collaboratively to promote tourism growth built on a foundation of safety.

STATEMENT ON SA-ISRAEL STANCE

The South African government is currently involved in a legal case at the International Court of Justice regarding certain actions by the Israeli government. This reflects their perspective on the Israel-Palestine conflict, especially events in Gaza.

It's important to recognise that opinions in South Africa are diverse on this issue. While the government's position is clear, it doesn't represent the views of all South Africans. Many people here have different viewpoints - some argue for a more balanced approach to Israel and Palestine, while others question whether the government's current approach is effective.

Even with the government's stance, ties between South Africans and Israelis are still robust and diverse, including cultural, social and economic links. There is ongoing open engagement with Israeli society,

which includes welcoming Israeli and Jewish visitors to South Africa. Our country is proud of its diversity and hospitality, and we assure all international tourists, including Israelis, that they are welcome here.

We understand travellers may be concerned about potential unrest due to these political issues. We want to firmly reassure everyone that South Africa remains a peaceful travel destination for Israeli and Jewish travellers. Political debates like these don't lead to hostility or violence within our borders. Our commitment to providing a safe and enriching experience for visitors remains unchanged.

South Africa continues to value dialogue and peaceful exchange. Visitors from around the world, including Israel, can explore and enjoy the unique experiences we offer here.

Yours in tourism,
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