

Nairobi attack will have 'minimal' impact on tourism, says analyst



Olivier Ponti, Vice President Insights, ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys, which forecasts future travel patterns by analyzing 17 million booking transactions a day, predicts that the impact of the terrorist attack on the DusitD2 hotel in Nairobi on January 15 will have a minimal impact on tourism to Kenya and any setback in visitor arrivals will last less than two weeks.

ForwardKeys' opinion is based on an analysis of the attack on the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi in 2013 and its experience of analyzing similar terrorist incidents.

The 2013 terror attack had a clear and immediate impact on both international flight bookings and physical arrivals, but the effects faded after about six weeks.

Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, said: "Of course it is likely that had the attack on Westgate been foiled in advance, there would have been no setbacks in bookings and arrivals and the growth in tourism would have continued even more strongly.

"However, the bottom line is that within less than two weeks, tourism to Kenya returned to growth. By comparison with the Westgate attack, fortunately fewer people have died and the siege ended more quickly, which means that the incident has received far less media attention. It is also significant that all the terrorists have been killed because the possibility of the same perpetrators striking again has been eliminated. However, if there were to be another similar attack, or spate of attacks, in the near future, as happened in Istanbul in 2015, our assessment could change."