

## CATO Statement on Travel to the Middle East

12 Oct 2023

### Israel & Palestinian Territories

We are incredibly saddened by the terrible situation unfolding over the past days in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Our thoughts are with all of the innocent people impacted by these events. As an industry focused on building connections and understanding between cultures we condemn all violence and hope that peace soon prevails.

As soon as the news broke, impacted CATO members acted immediately to ensure the safety of their passengers and staff within Israel and suspended all upcoming tours to ensure no new clients would be entering Israel at this time.

These actions were some 30 hours ahead of the increase of travel warnings through the [DFAT Smartraveller](#) system. This highlights the proactive approach of CATO members who base their decisions on multiple data sources including their on-ground teams and agents. Booking through an Australian based CATO member provides the highest level of support for Australian travellers and travel agents.

At this stage travel to Israel will remain suspended for some time. Travel agents and travellers should check with individual CATO members for the latest information on travel to Israel.

### Egypt and Jordan

Both Egypt and Jordan remain open to visitors with all tours operating as scheduled. Security measures generally in each country have been increased but all hotels and tourist sights are open and operating as normal.

October marks the start of the high season for travel to both Egypt and Jordan with travellers from all over the world coming to experience the wonders of the ancient world, the incredible natural scenery and the warmth and rich culture of the local people. This includes a large number of Australians travelling with CATO tour operators and wholesalers.

CATO members are reporting that Australian travellers currently in Egypt and Jordan are continuing to enjoy their tours as normal.

Whilst Israeli tourists in Egypt have returned back to Israel there are no reports of significant cancellations from any other markets.

Travel agents and travellers are advised to check with their CATO tour operator or wholesaler for any further updates.

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