

Recommendations for Tourist Safety and Improved Conditions in the Tourism Industry Upon Returning from the Dominican Republic



Presented by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)

Earlier this month, Representative Adriano Espaillat (NY-13) visited the Dominican Republic where he met with government officials, executives from the tourism industry and officials of the United States Embassy to discuss efforts to support tourism on the Caribbean island and collaboration with the authorities in search for security models for the protection of tourists to ensure the Dominican Republic remains a world-class tourist destination.

"I am deeply concerned about the recent deaths of U.S. citizens visiting the Dominican Republic," said Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13). "My office will do everything we can to get answers and understand these cases. The Dominican Republic, though, continues to be one of the top tourist destinations for Americans.

"As the State Department has noted, 'We have not seen an uptick in the number of U.S. citizen deaths reported to the Department.' The U.S. Embassy in the Dominican Republic has stated, 'that 2.7 million U.S. citizens visit the Dominican Republic each year,' and that the Ambassador and the Embassy team in the Dominican Republic 'have met with the President, Attorney General, Tourism Minister, Foreign Minister, Health Minister, and the heads of the Dominican National Police and Tourism Police to offer U.S. law enforcement support in local efforts, and to urge a rapid, thorough and transparent investigation process on behalf of U.S. citizens.'

"In light of these facts, I encourage everyone to continue to view the Dominican Republic as a preeminent tourist destination. Based on the discussions I had with Dominican and American officials when I was on the island, I submit the following recommendations on ways to help strengthen U.S. – D.R. relations to ensure that the safety of travelers remains a top priority, as well as to ensure that the Dominican Republic continues to be a world-class tourist destination in the Caribbean.

Recommendations for Tourist Safety and Improved Conditions

1. **Continuing to deepen coordination between the Dominican Republic's Attorney General's Office and U.S. law enforcement agencies**, including the ATF and FBI, will help to understand the facts on any case involving the death of a U.S. citizen in a timely manner.
2. **The Dominican Government can engage in third-party contracts to help ensure that necessary and proper facilities are available** for law enforcement to undertake independent, thorough and efficient forensic autopsies and toxicology reports.
3. **In order to better ensure public safety of tourist destinations across the island, the Dominican Government can increase the capacity of Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Turística (CESTUR)**, the country's specialist police corps dedicated to tourism.
4. **The Tourism Ministry should continue to work with hotels to ensure that tourists and guests have readily available access to emergency services and standardized information on emergency services**, such as how to contact the local 9-1-1 system, posted in hotel rooms and as a hand-out upon arriving at all hotels and resorts.
5. **The Tourism Ministry can build upon existing international standards for monitoring the quality of food and alcohol** offered at hotels and resorts by conducting a stronger, second tier review.
6. **The Tourism Ministry can ensure the safety and health of tourists by offering access to affordable emergency health services during their stay.** This can be done by providing health insurance coverage in tourism packages.

Tasa de homicidios en Latinoamérica y el Caribe en 2018



Source: insightcrime.org

Seguridad a Turistas 2015- 2018



Source: Ministerio de Turismo Republica Dominicana

###

First elected to Congress in 2016, Rep. Adriano Espaillat is serving his second term in Congress where he serves as a member of the influential U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the House Small Business Committee. He serves as a Senior Whip of the House Democratic Caucus and is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) where he also serves in a leadership role as CHC Whip. He is also chairman of the CHC Task Force for Transportation, Infrastructure and Housing. Rep. Espaillat’s Congressional District includes Harlem, East Harlem, northern Manhattan and the north-west Bronx. To find out more about Rep. Espaillat, visit online at <https://espaillat.house.gov/>.