

# Sri Lanka suffers cancellation tsunami

26<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Analysis by ForwardKeys, which forecasts future travel patterns by analysing over 17 million flight booking transactions a day, reveals that a tidal wave of cancellations has hit Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the horrendous terror attacks of Easter Sunday.

In the three days immediately after the bombings, cancellations of existing bookings surged 86.2% whilst new bookings fell away. In Sri Lanka's most important source markets, more people cancelled existing flights than made bookings on the equivalent day last year. In order of size, that comprises India, China, the UK, Australia, Germany and France. Forward bookings for July and August, which had been running 2.6% ahead of last year, as of 20<sup>th</sup> April, fell to 0.3% behind as of 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

Prior to the Easter Sunday atrocities, Sri Lanka's tourism industry was showing healthy growth. Flight bookings to Sri Lanka in 2019 (1<sup>st</sup> Jan to 20<sup>th</sup> April) were 3.4% up on the same period in 2018. The tourism highlights were Russia, Australia and China, which showed visitor increases of 45.7%, 19.0% and 16.8% respectively.

Jameson Wong, Director, Business Development, APAC, ForwardKeys, said: "What Sri Lanka has suffered is just horrendous and our hearts go out to all the victims, their families and the people of Sri Lanka." He continued: "At the moment, it is really too early to predict what the effect on tourism to Sri Lanka will be, as the initial wave of cancellations affects trips planned in the very near term. If we look back at past terrorist atrocities, it is interesting to note how different the impacts can be. In the wake of the bloody siege at the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi, bookings suffered a similar collapse in the immediate aftermath; however, within less than two weeks, international arrivals returned to growth. By comparison, it has taken more than three years to see a Tunisian tourism recovery following the massacre on the beach in Sousse in 2015. We will keep the situation under review."

Ends

## About ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys analyses more than 17m flight booking transactions a day, drawing data from all the major global air reservation systems and selected airlines and tour operators. This information is enhanced with further independent data sets, including flight search and official government statistics, plus data science to paint a picture of who is travelling where and when. ForwardKeys' analytics are used by travel marketers, retailers, hotels, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), financial institutions, car rental companies, tour operators, online travel agents (OTAs) and other traveller-focussed businesses worldwide to monitor and anticipate traveller arrivals from a particular origin market at a specific time. This analysis enables parties to anticipate the impact of events, better manage their staffing levels, fine tune supply requirements, adjust and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and anticipate future market trends.

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