



Jameson Wong, APAC Business Development Director, ForwardKeys

Sri Lanka struggles to recover from Easter bombings

3 months on, flight bookings have stabilised – at 26% down

A report from ForwardKeys, which analyses over 17 million flight bookings a day, has revealed that three months after the Easter Sunday suicide bombings, on April 21st, Sri Lanka's tourism industry is still suffering; although a slow recovery appears to be underway.

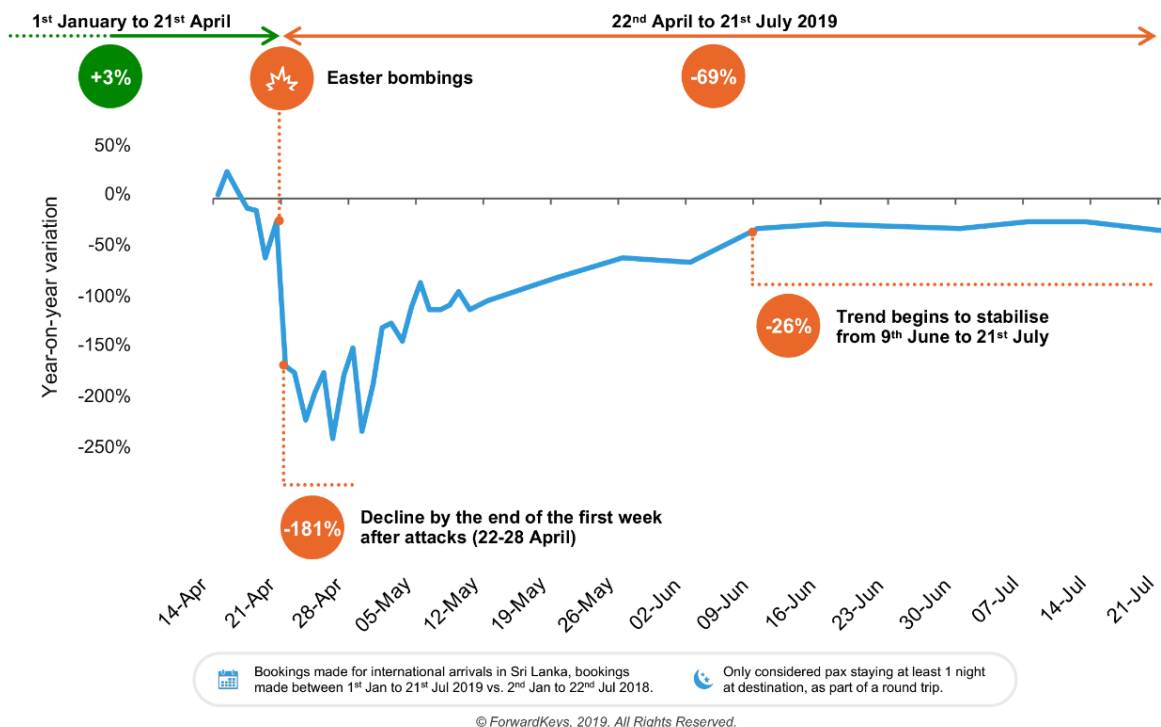
Between 1st January and 21st April, international flight bookings to Sri Lanka were 3% up on the year before. However, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, there was a spike in cancellations and bookings collapsed. The first week saw a decline of 181%, which means that in addition to no new bookings being made, there was a wave of cancellations of existing bookings.

The Sri Lankan police responded forcefully and, within six days, over 70 suspects had been arrested. Just over a week later, on 7th May, the Prime Minister declared that all the jihadists responsible had been caught or killed.

From the beginning of May, a timid recovery trend began, but bookings still have a long way to go before they are back to last year's levels. Over the whole three-month period (April 22nd – July 21st), bookings have been 69% down on the equivalent dates in 2018.

Less than two months after the suicide bombings, flight bookings to Sri Lanka stabilised. From 9th June to 21st July, the level plateaued at 26% down on the equivalent period last year.

Bookings made for international arrivals in Sri Lanka, 1st January to 21st July 2019, year-on-year variation



Jameson Wong, APAC Business Development Director, ForwardKeys, said: “One has to feel deep sympathy for the people of Sri Lanka. They suffered from a coordinated campaign of ghastly suicide bombings on Easter Sunday, a day of the year which will make the horrors harder to forget. The deliberate targeting of tourists, as well as locals, is having a severe impact on a valuable sector of the country’s economy, which (according to the World Travel & Tourism Council) is responsible for 27% of export revenue. We are seeing initial signs of recovery, but it is likely to take time before visitors regain their confidence in travelling to this beautiful country. The irony is that this is a really good time to visit Sri Lanka, as there will be pressure on prices. Also, it will be a fantastic experience to support a recovering nation and feel the warmth of Sri Lankan hospitality.”

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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