

## **Tourism Safety and Security: Strategies Adopted by some African Economies**

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*Most African countries depend on tourism for job creation and income generation; and in order to attract more international tourists, Africa should provide a safe and secure environment for visitors. Safety and security are significant towards quality tourism and should be regarded as a key objective especially in Africa where tourism competitiveness is weak. This issue deepens the need for policy reforms and improvement in this area. The aim of this study is to establish the tourist safety and security strategies adopted by four African countries namely, Mauritius, Egypt, Tanzania, and Botswana. The study adopts a literature review approach to gather data, and an analysis of the data is used to establish similarities and differences in the strategies utilised by the four benchmarking countries. The outcome of this study reveals that strong collaborations between the public and private sector in ensuring safety and security in the tourism sector is critical. Intra-governmental collaborations are also essential in facilitating and promoting cooperation to provide safety and security for tourists. An investment in modern technology and development of relevant laws and regulations are also key in providing a secure and safe environment for tourists. The study further develops medium-term and short-term strategies to guide other African economies for improving safety and security for tourism purposes.*

**Keywords:** *tourism, safety and security, Africa, strategies, policy*

### **Introduction**

Tourism is a growing industry that directly and indirectly leads to a positive impact on economic development (Tachir and Alali 2022, Rasethuntsa 2022). Because destinations are competing with each other to attract tourists (Sayeh 2022), tourists are likely to avoid unsafe destinations or regions, making them less attractive for visiting. Safety and security in tourism is not a new phenomenon and had been identified as a tourism problem since the 1950s (Van Vuuren 2016). Peace and security are factors that determine international tourist flow in to a tourist destination (Gidebo 2021, Mawby and Vakhitova 2022), and as noted by Kovari and Zimanyi (2011), safety and security matters have become a topic of higher interest in the tourism discipline over the past two decades. Furthermore, the study of Kovari and Zimanyi (2011) also articulates that the world was faced with several changes during the last two decades like terrorist acts, civil wars, natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics which have all led to a decline in security. The travel and tourism industry globally could not escape the harmful

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consequences of these events. For example, Lebanon's political instability, terrorism incidents, and wars led to a strong deterioration in tourism development and a decreasing number of foreign tourists (Harb 2016). Again, Walters et al. (2015), identified that there is a strong relationship between destination image and destination choice in the post-disaster context. This research identified that people who chose not to visit Queensland (Australia) labelled Queensland a poor image destination after the flooding; hence influencing their decision not to visit the area.

Because tourism brings many people in a small area and introduces new people to a tourist destination, this does sometimes lead to problems such as crime (Lisowska 2017). Examples of travel and tourism crime-related incidents include robbery, theft, rape, murder, and kidnapping (Pizam and Mansfeld 2006). Tourism is also affected by security threats such as terrorism and corruption targeted to international tourists (Fourie et al. 2020). Type of motives declared for these crimes mostly include religion and hostility on tourists and destruction of an area economy (Pizam and Mansfeld 2006). To exemplify, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Turkey are examples of countries which have suffered declines in religious visitors due to tourists being attacked. The upsurge of religious terrorism which is understood to be motivated by religion is an ongoing dilemma which threatens tourism, and this issue calls for terrorism laws and policies to be implemented (Chowdhury et al. 2017).

## **Literature Review**

Research on tourism security has recently been dominated by the terrorism factor citing reasons of this phenomena as, unemployment, tourism in the attacked countries, spill-overs from other countries not involved in the event, and deflation (Baker 2014, Neumeyer and Plumper 2016, Goldman and Neubauer-Shani 2017). For example, Lebanon's tourism suffered because of events that took place in the nearby countries and the region such as, the Arab Spring, the Syrian conflict (Harb 2016). As much as safety and security issues are a dilemma in tourism destinations, (Lisowska 2017) highlighted that challenges related to assembling criminal information result in relatively few studies being conducted regarding the challenges of tourism and crime. In an attempt to improve security in the transport sector, the Belgian Civil Aviation Authority (2010) highlighted some strategies that were developed for civil aviation in Belgium, and these include:

- Establishing a national safety library.
- Developing safety performance indicators.
- Developing a strategy concerning safety training and safety promotion.

Unfortunately, developing countries in this era are still experiencing challenges of establishing tourism policies that address today's current tourism issues (Okharedia 2017). Looking back at the United Nations World Tourism Organisation reports, it could be established that developed countries have long-established tourism safety and security measures. For example, the United Nations

World Tourism Organisation (1996) shared that to secure safety and security for its tourists, the United States formed coordination committees meet at the beginning of every summer to discuss emerging issues, coordination of joint actions, and guidelines unification. Regional committees are composed of security, civil protection, tourism officials, local communities, and other persons concerned. Once the season is over, a study day is organised at the country level to review the action plan, present the statistics, examine the results, and draw conclusions and draft proposals to help modify or improve the future action.

According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018), world security is not standing still, for example, changes in economic power, instability and insecurity around Europe has fast-tracked technological developments, an escalation in hybrid, and conflicts within Europe are speedily having an impact on The Netherlands security. Treinnovski and Jefimovs (2012) highlight that in as much as the idea of national security is not a new concept, the development of mankind influenced the need to investigate more on the idea of national security considering not only visible but internal and invisible threats extending it on economic, political, crime rate, natural resource, state borders, and natural hazards. For example, globalisation forced governments to emphasise the opening of borders, making it possible for the movement of people to be easy. However, this has opened doors for the transport of illegal substances like drugs, criminal and terrorist networks, illegal migration, environmentally damaging exotic species, and cross border movement of pathogens, such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (Asghari 2016). In Nigeria, for example, new forms of violent crimes have become a norm; these include kidnapping, Boko Haram bombings, rape, public and private institutions being attacked and political violence (Otto and Ukpere 2012). These security challenges have resulted in an increment in budget spending for security and the destruction of valuable government facilities which have all threatened the sustainable economic development of this country (Adebakin and Raimi 2012).

Rouhiainen (2013) also shed light that the world has dramatically changed, and people have been transferred from safe private homes to a unified global living environment which has its risks and threats. This study adds that threats cannot be wholly eradicated or predicted with accuracy, therefore, maintaining an acceptable standard of safety and security in modern society requires new ways of thinking, new safety culture and novel concepts of safety management. In this regard, the strategies that different countries use to meet actual challenges frequently differ greatly, as they are motivated by the country's specific social, political, and economic contexts (Herzog et al. 2016). For example, Australia's high safety and security condition have been influenced by their strong economy, unlikelihood of major war, highly-effective national security capability, and tight alliances with the United States, and they also have strong relations with many influential countries regionally and across the world. According to Shvindina (2019), collaborations are highly essential and are noted as a trend to promote safety and security.

Because factors related to safety and security appear as key drivers affecting travel decisions (Moya Calderón et al. 2022), this research aims to explore

mechanisms used by Mauritius, Egypt, Tanzania, and Botswana to promote tourist safety and security and will attempt to answer this main research question:

What are the practical measures adopted by Mauritius, Egypt, Tanzania, and Botswana to improve tourist safety and security?

According to the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) reports of 2015; 2017; 2019; 2022, these four countries are among the leading performers in tourism in the African continent. As observed from the TTCI reports between 2007 and 2022, African countries have a weak tourism competitive stand as evidenced by the low-ranking scores there-in (World Economic Forum 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022). However, it could be noted from the TTCI reports that Mauritius, Egypt, Botswana, and Tanzania have at least been ranked among the 10 best performing countries in Africa and their performance in tourism have improved from 2015 to 2019. Most African countries rank in the bottom 30 out of an average of 135 countries; indicating that Africa has a small market share in the global tourism industry (World Economic Forum 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022). The selected countries' strategies would therefore be used to inform policy for other African countries to enable improvements and policy reforms in tourist safety and security to boost tourism performance in less competitive countries.

## **Methodology**

This study identified a literature review approach as the best method to generate information for the subject under investigation. Secondary data appeared to provide a suitable pool of data to allow the researcher to bring-forth reliable findings. According to Blaikie (2009), research data can be gathered through primary, secondary, and tertiary data means. Literature can serve as a basis for knowledge development, create guidelines for policy and practice, provide evidence of an effect, and have the capacity to create new ideas and directions for a particular field (Snyder 2019). The safety and tourism practices of Mauritius, Egypt, Tanzania and Botswana shall therefore be explored using information from various secondary sources. Various means were used to generate information for this research. These included scholarly online databases, government and non-governmental organizations reports, magazines, newspapers, Google Scholar, books, and government and non-governmental organizations websites to identify strategies employed by Mauritius, Egypt, Tanzania and Botswana towards improving tourist safety and security. A table format was used to analyze the findings and identify the strategies' similarities and differences. This enabled to study to develop medium- and short-term strategies or policy recommendations that can be considered by other African countries to improve safety and security for tourism purposes.

## Results

### *Case of Mauritius*

In Mauritius, crimes directed to tourists such as pickpocketing and purse snatching usually occurs in busy shopping malls, tourists' attractions areas and near Automated Teller Machines (Riskline 2023). With tourism as one key sector in the Mauritian economy, the government intends to safeguard the country's image as a safe tourism destination hence the installation of Circuit Television Surveillance Systems in key tourists' areas including the urban zones. Plans are in the pipeline to expand the network to other high-risk areas. Also, in collaboration with the private sector, the Mauritius government has also expressed its intention to develop smart cities and technopoles across the country, and it is expected that these initiatives will generate significant demand for security equipment and services and to ensure residences safety (International Trade Administration 2017).

The Mauritian police have prevented a handful of Automated Teller Machines (ATM) skimming operations before ATM users sustained losses (Riskline 2023). The Mauritius Police Force is fully oriented in its duties regarding the increasing number of tourists visiting their country. The department objectives have been directed towards ensuring more protection and safety to tourists, speeding investigations of crimes where tourists are victims and handing out information regarding the outcome of the investigations. The department has also increased presence next to hotels, restaurants, shopping centres, and other related areas. In addition to these, the department further carries out regular patrols and responds to requests for assistance coming from tourists directly or through the Police Information Room (The Mauritius Police Force 2018).

In Mauritius, hotel room thefts sometimes occur, though most burglars normally avoid confrontation and break-ins do not typically involve violence (Riskline 2023). To address this challenge, the Mauritian government requires all tourists' accommodation facilities to provide locks and in-room digital safes as well as access control systems in secured areas (International Trade Administration 2017). All these strategies contributed to Mauritius falling among the safest countries in the region for visitors (Riskline 2023).

### *Case of Egypt*

The Egyptian government exercises a high degree of caution due to the unpredictable security situation and threat of terrorism, hence, there is a high presence of Egyptian Armed Forces in high-risk destinations across the country (Government of Canada 2023a). Egypt has been identified as a medium threat location for crime directed to foreigners and many criminal attacks against foreigners are crimes of opportunity (United States Department of State Travel Advisory 2018a). To attract more tourists to Egypt and to ensure the visitors' safety and security, the Egyptian government set aside 250 million Egyptian pounds (\$32 million) to strengthen the state of security at the country's key resorts in 2016. Moreover, the Egyptian government has taken actions to strengthen

tourists' security by purchasing detectors and new scanners, increasing the number of security workers in the tourism sector, and deploying more police dogs (Gore 2016).

In addition to these, the government of Egypt in collaboration with the public sector, are appraising the current security systems and technologies to upgrade these pieces of equipment in airports, sea points, and public facilities. The police department is also continuing to stay abreast with the latest innovations to ensure Egypt's safety and security (International Trade Administration 2018). To ensure passengers' security, the Egyptian government managed to improve airport security by partnering with the British aviation security firm (Principles for Responsible Investment 2017). Egypt visitors may experience a range of professionalism when dealing with police, as the police are highly responsive to visitors' who need assistance and will initiate investigations based on the report of crime (United States Department of State Travel Advisory 2018a).

### *Case of Tanzania*

According to the Intelligent Protection International Limited (2023a), Tanzania is ranked as a medium high-risk country in terms of safety and security for tourists as there is a general threat of terrorism where western tourists are the main targets of terror attacks. Crimes that could affect tourists usually occur in areas such as beaches, hotels, nightclubs, cinemas, and shopping centres. Most crimes targeted to tourists are committed by unarmed assailants and normally occur in urban areas where these assailants target people carrying bags, backpacks, computer cases, cameras, purses, or items left visible inside a vehicle (Government of Canada 2023b).

In response to these security threats, in consultation with all related stakeholders, the Tanzania Police Force established a special unit which is aimed at improving the security of diplomats and tourists in the country. The mandate of this unit was established after consultation with all tourism stakeholders (Tanzania Tourist Board 2018). Another example of a safety measure taken by the Tanzanian government to tighten security and safety for tourists is that a few days before the general elections, there is always a huge deployment of tight security in most streets in Dar Salaam, Arusha and other key tourism sites. This move intends to encourage incoming tourists and to guarantee a 100% security status even though the country is heading to the national elections (Tairo 2015).

According to Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (2014), to strengthen travellers' security, one strategy used by the Tanzanian government was to draw the civil aviation security regulations in 2014 to safeguard civil aviation against illegal acts to protect airports, travellers and airport properties. The intention was also to regulate the conduct of people at airports and on-board aircraft for civil aviation security. As a result, the Tanzania Airport Authority (2018) reports that in all airports, security checks have been reinforced by the screening of passengers and their baggage to assure that there are no prohibited items and dangerous substances.

*Case of Botswana*

According to the Intelligent Protection International Limited (2023b), Botswana is ranked as a low-medium risk country in terms of safety and security for tourists. Criminal incidents that could affect Botswana's tourists are mainly crimes of opportunity such as smash-and-grab from parked cars, purse snatching, and residential burglaries. To curb the rate of crimes like these, Botswana has enforced strict gun control laws. The government has engaged in public awareness campaigns sensitising people about this issue and encouraging citizens to report illegal firearms to the police (United States Department of State Advisory 2018b).

Also, in an effort to build crime-free streets and improved security for tourists, the country's police department has engaged Huawei to install surveillance cameras in major cities and strategic locations. The instalment of cameras has recently been completed in Gaborone, which was to be followed by Francis Town (Dinale 2018). It has been reported that the police department has increased visibility in tourist attractions by having regular patrols which in-turn has significantly decreased the frequency of crimes targeted to tourists (Botswana Police Service 2015).

To upgrade the level of safety and security for tourists, the Botswana Tourism Subsidiary Legislation emphasises that suitable firefighting equipment shall be offered to all tourist organisations where accommodation for tourists is provided and shall be easily accessible and marked (Government of Botswana 1996). Having put all these strategies in place, according to the Intelligent Protection International Limited (2023b), Botswana is generally viewed as a safe country ranking in low-medium level threat countries.

**Lessons Learned from Mauritius, Egypt, Tanzania and Botswana**

From the review of the four countries, important lessons can be drawn. Table 1 outlines the strategies employed by the four selected countries for the second pillar in the TTCI model, namely safety and security. It could be noted from the table that all countries except Tanzania have installed surveillance cameras and other technological security systems in key tourism areas, while all other countries except Mauritius have collaborations with the public community to fight tourism crimes. Only Mauritius and Egypt have made a move towards smart cities and technopoles and have kept an eye to technological developments that improve tourists' safety and security. Both Mauritius and Botswana increased police presence near key tourism zones and established safety laws that guide the hotel industry. Both Tanzania and Egypt have engaged in civil aviation to fight tourism-related crimes. Only Mauritius applied a strategy to speed-up the investigation of crimes targeted to tourists. Botswana's unique strategy there-in includes awareness campaigns about strict gun control laws while Tanzania's unique strategy was an establishment of a special unit responsible for tourism within the police department and engagement of once-off special operations to protect tourists.

**Table 1.** *Tourist Safety and Security Strategies Analysis*

<b>Strategies implemented by Mauritius, Botswana, Tanzania, and Egypt</b>	<b>Mauritius</b>	<b>Botswana</b>	<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>Egypt</b>
Installation of surveillance cameras and other technological security systems in key tourism areas	X	X		X
Collaborations with the public community to fight tourism crimes		X	X	X
Move towards smart cities and technopoles and keeping an eye to technological developments that improve tourists' safety	X			X
Increased police presence near key tourism zones	X	X		
Establishments of safety laws that guide the hotel industry	X	X		
Engagement of civil aviation to fight tourism-related crimes			X	X
Speeding investigation of crimes targeted to tourists	X			
Awareness campaigns about strict gun control laws		X		
Establishment of a special unit responsible for tourism within the police department			X	
Once-off special operations to protect tourists			X	
Injecting heavy financial resources in tourists' safety and security				X
Purchase of new scanner and detectors				X
Increase number of security workers in the tourism sector and deploying more police dogs				X
High presence of the armed forces in high-risk destinations				X
Improvement of professionalism in the police service for tourism-related crimes				X

Source: Researcher's own compilation.

Egypt's unique strategies included injecting heavy financial resources in tourists' safety and security, purchasing of new scanners and detectors, increasing numbers of security workers in the tourism sector, high presence of the armed forces in high-risk destinations, deploying more police dogs, and improving professionalism in the police service for tourism-related crimes.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

From the results, it can be learned that government intervention plays a major role in ensuring tourist safety and security. The government role includes establishing collaborations with the general public and the private sector, investing in equipment such as cameras and technological security systems, police engagement in key tourism areas, development of tourism related safety and security laws. The results also highlight that countries have established different measures towards promoting safety and security in tourism destinations. Government agencies such as the civil aviation and the police force are identified as strategic partners towards improving tourist safety and security. It appears that massive financial resources are a necessity towards building a safe and secure



environment for tourists, for example, investment in modern technologies such as cameras.

### *Policy Recommendations*

#### Short Term

- Government and private sector to form collaborations with the public community to fight tourism crimes as it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to fight tourism crimes.
- Government and private sector to keep an eye on developments that improve tourists' safety.
- Government to coordinate efforts to increase police presence near key tourism zones as this would restore tourists' confidence and ease travelling around the country.
- Government to engage the civil aviation to fight tourism-related crimes and equip this unit with appropriate resources as this is the tourists' first point of entry.
- Police to speed investigation of crimes targeted to tourists as this would restore tourists' confidence in the destination the system.

#### Medium-Term

- Government to install surveillance cameras and other technological security systems in key tourism areas and steer a move towards smart cities and technopoles.
- Government to establish safety laws that guide the hotel industry as these are potential crime targeted areas.
- Government to inject heavy financial resources in tourists' safety and security;
- Government to device measures to improve professionalism in the police service for tourism-related crimes.
- Private sector to increase number of security workers in tourism business sector to ensure tourists security.

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