Bali Tourism Workers Being Unnecessarily Hurt By Volcano Speculation

Mt Agung is far away from Bali's main tourism centres; tourism cancellations are 'unwarranted' – tour operator; #IaminBaliNOW launched to help Bali's tourist sector combat cancellations

Tourists should keep visiting Bali as it is perfectly safe to do so. That was the recommendation made by Herman Hoven, General Manager of Khiri Travel Indonesia today.

Mr Hoven said there had been at least a 20% drop in tourism bookings in the Bali tourism sector at large, since the 3031m (9944ft) Mt Agung volcano started to show increased signs of activity in the third week of September.

"There has been no explosion. There may never be. And the vast majority of Bali's tourism activities take place between 30 and 60 kms [18 and 37 miles] from Mt Agung, at a safe distance," he said.

"Irresponsible reporting and comments on social media have created an unwarranted fear factor while the situation on the ground in Bali remains calm and tourism operators remain fully open for business," he said.

Tourism is by far the largest economic sector in Bali, accounting for around 40% of the local economy, although reliable statistics are hard to find.

No major government travel advisories have been issued recommending tourists to cancel. Instead, overseas governments advise tourists to monitor reliable media reports and follow advice from Balinese provincial authorities.

Travel advisories admit that volcanic ash clouds may cause aviation disruption if Mt Agung erupts.

"That remains a distant and hypothetical scenario," said Mr Hoven. "At the moment it is safe here, so tourists should contact their tour operator to confirm travel plans – and stick to their intention to visit Bali."

He added: "We would not tell our clients to visit if we thought it was not safe."

#IaminBaliNOW campaign launched
The #iaminBaliNOW social media campaign has been launched to support Balinese tourism and show tourists in Bali having a great time now – despite speculation about Mt Agung.

The campaign, launched by Bali-based Alex Tusk, the founder of bookgreener.com and RefillMyBottle.com, is modelled on the crowd-sourced social media campaign that Nepal used in 2015 following the major earthquake there.

Tusk said: "Persistent misinformation is threatening the livelihood of many entrepreneurs, their staff and families who rely on tourism income in Bali — not only those directly in the tourism sector but also, for example, farmers, who supply restaurants and hotels."

#IaminBaliNOW aims to address the issue head on with the facts.

“#IaminBaliNow is a crowd-sourced, social media campaign to showcase Bali as it is now, with reliable, up-to-the date information, facts, photos and stories,” said Tusk.

Khiri Travel Indonesia, which is based in Bali, can be contacted at sales.indonesia@khiri.com.

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About Khiri Travel
Since 1993, Khiri Travel has won awards and earned a reputation as a destination management company dedicated to working with select tour operators to provide quality leisure travel experiences across Asia. With 16 offices in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Khiri Travel’s entrepreneurial associates craft innovative itineraries that reflect their passion for authentic, local and sustainable experiences. Visit khiri.com.

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