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## Tourists' Security: The Need for Tourism Police in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mehmet Murat Payam<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Property Protection and Security, Social Sciences Vocational College, Adiyaman University, Turkey.

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*The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show the necessity of tourism police for tourism destinations, give some knowledge about the relationship between tourism and tourism security and present some practical recommendations on tourism police for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is accepted that tourism is a vital revenue source for many countries. It is also a fast-growing sector making up an important part in the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, too. It is also accepted that tourists are affected by the perception of safety and security at the destinations. Studies made on tourism indicate that safety and security is a factor of growing importance in choosing the destination and having a peaceful holiday at destinations. In addition, safety and security is considered to be a pillar of tourism competitiveness with 'reliability of police services' a central anchor in Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report. Without doubt, safety and security will sell the tourism in the near future. Thus, it is believed that "Tourism Police" may help create the destination image and market the tourism. For this purpose, the Tourism Police should be set up in order to provide security to the tourists visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina as any investments in tourism policing could be an investment in the economic future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, some practical recommendations will be put forward for improving police protection of tourists in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

\*Corresponding author: E-mail: [mpayam@adiyaman.edu.tr](mailto:mpayam@adiyaman.edu.tr);

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is accepted by everybody that tourism is a vital revenue source for many countries. This is also valid for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as tourism is a fast growing sector that provides significant contribution to the economic growth of BiH and BiH has been a top performer in recent years in terms of tourism development [1]. In addition, according to an estimation of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), BiH is defined as one of only three tourism destinations in the world with overall tourism market growth potential in excess of 10% annually through 2020 [1,2,3,4]. In spite of the fact that there are three constituent peoples in BiH, there is one Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, every individual, regardless of their ethnicity, should do his best to improve the tourism potential of BiH as everyone benefits from the economic upturn of BiH.

Another accepted fact is that tourists are affected by the perception of safety and security at the destinations [5]. Namely, security is a vital accepted paradigm of tourism image building. In a study conducted in California, visitors stated that safety and security is a top factor in choosing their destinations [6]. Studies made on tourism indicate that safety and security is a factor of growing importance in choosing the destination [7,8,9,10] and having a peaceful holiday at destinations. Many researchers also argued that safety and security are most important to tourists while traveling and the first aspect they consider is safety and security [7,11,12,13]. As also mentioned in WTO's Manual, safety and security are essential for providing quality in tourism [14]. In addition, in Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report published by World Economic Forum (WEF) safety and security is considered to be a pillar of tourism competitiveness with 'reliability of police services' a central anchor [15]. As safety and security in tourism are very important for tourists while traveling, tourism sector, tourism authorities and also the people in BiH have to cooperate with the police department and private security agencies to prevent tourism related crimes at the destinations in BiH and to enhance the sense of safety and security in BiH.

Latest events at tourism destinations such as in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria show that safety and security, with no doubt, will sell the tourism in the

near future. Thus, it is believed that tourism police may help create the destination image and market the tourism, and it is important in helping and protecting the tourism industry [5,16,17,18,19,20]. As any safety or security mishap can destroy a tourism destination's reputation, safety and security of the tourists should be a matter of national security [5] of BiH. Consequently, the Tourism Police should be set up in order to provide security to the tourists visiting BiH as any investments in tourism policing could be an investment in the economic future of BiH. At least there should be consensus on the necessity to introduce a Tourism Police Unit in major cities in BiH such as Sarajevo, Mostar and Tuzla because destinations' security image is considered critical on travel decisions and "these cities are mostly visited by tourists for the period from 2002 to 2012" [21].

In short, this article will provide an overview of tourism security and concentrate on the world of Tourism Policing. This article is important in drawing attention to the security issues in tourism with an aim of becoming one of world's most preferred tourism destinations in terms of BiH. In this regard, the relationship between tourism and security will be referred to after the conceptual framework presented in this article. Then, the functions and responsibilities of the Tourism Police will be mentioned. Finally, some practical recommendations will be put forward for improving police protection of tourists in BiH.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Tourism Police

The acronym TOPPs is often used for tourism police/policing, which means Tourism/Tourist Oriented Policing and Protection Services. TOPPs was first proposed in the early part of the 1990s by tourism security experts such as Tarlow, Pizam and Mansfeld [22]. In 1994, the Metro-Dade Police Department formed the first Tourism Police Unit, which was a partnership between the police department, the Federal Aviation Administration and the airlines serving the Miami International Airport [23]. Tourism Police is a system that protects and saves the lives and the properties of tourists from many threats and hazards. These are special police(wo)men who work for tourists' protection, safety and security [24].

Tourism Policing was first defined by the Miami Metro-Dade Police Department as “a philosophy of policing based on the concept that specially trained police officers, working closely with business leaders, airport authorities, businesses that cater to the traveling public, and private citizens can help prevent or tremendously reduce the tourism problems related to crime, fear of crime, and the decay of the neighborhoods that tourist frequently travel” [23]. Tourism policing is different from any other forms of policing and it takes the relationship between the visitor and the locale’s economy into account. So just changing uniforms or calling someone a tourism police officer without proper training and education may actually be counter-productive [25].

## 2.2 Tourism Security

There is no one definition for the term “security” and the terms safety and security are generally used interchangeably. It is seen that three concepts are used when dealing with the subject of tourism security. Most frequently, it is safety and security, but some authors combine the two concepts into a single one, that is “surety” [26,27]. Security can be defined as “a condition of being protected against planned, malicious and criminal incidents from a wide range of threats, where what is protected is all kinds of values to an organization/individual and incidents happen due to the wish for a wanted output/consequence for the attacker” [28]. Security is often seen as protection against a person or thing that seeks to do another harm. On the other hand, safety is often defined as protecting people against unintended consequences of an involuntary nature. For example, a case of arson is a security issue while a spontaneous fire is a safety issue [27].

In terms of tourism, safety can be seen as the protection of tourists from unintended incidents and security as the protection from incidents, where people act deliberately. However, tourism scientists and professionals do not make a clear distinction between security and safety. Tarlow [26] states that there is no generally accepted definition of “security” among experts and he [26,27] notes that some tourism experts combine the terms safety and security into one general term, “tourism surety”. Tarlow [26] defines tourism surety as “the point where tourism safety and security issues intersect with a place’s reputation and economic well-being”. However, in the practical world, the terms “safety” and “security” are often used almost interchangeably

and it might be unnecessary to distinguish security and safety, since both are protection the tourists against hazards/threats, no matter what the nature of the hazards/threats look like.

## 3. SECURITY AND TOURISM SECURITY IN BIH

With the increased frequency and severity of natural and man-made crises over the past decade, our feeling of safety has been challenged and our sense of security has become less secure. Thus, a critical component of any Destination Growth and Development Strategy is a clear, committed approach to visitor safety and security [29] as every people needs to feel secure whether at home or abroad. Tourists across the world agree that destinations have to improve security of their country otherwise tourists won’t come to them. A CNN global study recently found that 67 percent of respondents are worried about the safety and security of a destination more than its cost and reputation [30]. At tourism destinations, as you are a foreigner, you feel an increased need for security and avoid destinations that are perceived as insecure. As a result, one of the prerequisites of hospitality is that the host country must provide security to its guests psychologically and physiologically. That is, firstly destinations must provide security for their tourists. Recently many destinations such as Syria, Egypt and Tunisia have seen a decline in tourist flow because of unfavorable conditions for the tourists in terms of security. So we must be aware of the fact that “now more than ever, security is now connected to tourism” [31].

“More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourist destination depends on the ability to provide a safe and secure environment for its visitors” [32]. The perception of safety and security is vital to the success of a tourist destination. If an individual perceives an absence of security, both domestic and international tourism are affected [17]. Pizam and Mansfeld [33] state that the key to a favorable and satisfying development of tourism are the three basic principles called peace, safety and security. For this reason, BiH authorities should work for national, regional and international peace and security, which are essential to the development of domestic and international tourism. As tourism security is part of the tourism system and a failure or a mishap in security can cause the tourism system collapse [27]. As a result, if BiH wants to compete in

tourism industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it must include a tourism security component in its tourism marketing. According to WTO, safety and security are vital to ensure quality in tourism and should be one of the utmost importance objectives of tourism destinations [14]. Peace, safety and security are the primary conditions for successful tourism development [33]. The safety and security in tourism industry has been identified as one of the forces causing changes in the tourism sector in the new millennium [26,34].

Safety and security at tourism destinations is so important that destinations without safety and security will lose its competitive advantage sooner or later. A fundamental premise for tourism development is safety and security and any threat, real or perceived, can keep tourists away and impact development plans [35]. Security in tourism primarily refer to the personal safety of tourists and their property, but it includes an ability to become oriented in an alien environment, understand the local system of signs, indications and social conventions, and finally the security of shopping and consumer services [36]. However, security in tourism actually goes beyond travel and includes not only the security at the destinations but also the whole travel of visitor from home until return.

The WEF considers security as a competitive advantage or disadvantage for a specific country as a tourist destination. It deals with security separately in every annual analysis of competition in the tourism industry. In Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, BiH's Safety and Security Competitiveness Index for 2013 is 5.6, which gives the country a rank of 29 out of 140 countries. It is also interesting that the BiH's ranking in terms of "safety and security" is higher than neighboring countries [15,37]. But in fact the entire security system of BiH has not been completely established yet [38]. The overall crime rate in BiH remains high, with the greatest concentration of incidents in Sarajevo and other urban areas. Police have limited resources, minimal English, and insufficient capability to deter and/or detect crime [39,40]. In BiH, there are no conditions that would provide a well-balanced physical, spiritual, mental or material survival of each individual and the social community, with reference to other individuals and social community and ecology. In other words, there is no security [41]. According to Strategy for Development of Tourism in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina it is

necessary to fulfill the stable political and security environment for tourists for the period 2008 – 2018 for the smooth functioning of tourism [21].

Corruption has a higher prevalence rate than other crimes such as theft, burglary, robbery and assault. There is rather low crime rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where citizens feel safe at home after dark and do not use advanced security systems to protect their homes. The risk of falling victim to a crime such as robbery, theft or personal assault in Bosnia and Herzegovina is moderate [42]. The level of organized crime in BiH does not appear significantly higher than surrounding countries [43]. Landmines remain a problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina [40,44]. As of 2014, there were still numerous minefields and an estimated 200,000 active land mines and unexploded ordnances throughout the country. Apart from the mines, Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the safest places in Europe [44,45]. Violent crime is virtually non-existent against foreigners. The foreign community is rarely the target of violence [44,46]. For men and women alike, walking the streets of any town or city at any time of day or night is a relatively safe bet [44]. The overall crime rate throughout the country remains moderate, although Sarajevo has a consistently high rate of property crime [46]. Most criminal activity throughout Sarajevo is in the form of armed robberies, residential break-ins, break-ins and thefts of vehicles, and pick-pocketing [39,40,46].The main concerns for travelers to Bosnia and Herzegovina are pick-pockets on tramways in Sarajevo, car thieves, and mines. For women it is safe to walk at night, even late at night on your own [47]. In Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report it was reported by WEF that BiH was the world's eighth friendliest nation towards foreign tourists out of 140 countries [15].

#### 4. TOURISM POLICE FOR BIH

As the importance of tourism spread throughout the world, the idea of tourism policing also spread [27]. Countries around the world have developed a number of strategies to involve police in tourism industry, with some countries even establishing separate tourism police units for image formation. Thus, cooperation between the tourism industry and police is critical. Sönmez et al. [18] state that cooperation between the tourism industry and police agencies is critical when proactively dealing with tourism safety and security. That is to say, tourism policing presents a whole new concept of

proactive policing as a form of economic development relating to tourism [48]. Thus, police agencies throughout the world have begun developing and implementing specialized units whose "sole responsibility is the protection of tourists and have trained selected personnel to deal specifically with tourist matters" [11]. Most of the countries and cities in the world have also started to create specific tourism policing divisions [18].

Given the sensitivity of the tourism industry and tourists to safety and security related issues, member states should be encouraged to establish dedicated tourism police units or departments [32]. "The more uniformed police officers are visible at the tourist destinations, the more secure tourists feel about the destinations" [49]. But, it is also very important that too much police presence does not constantly remind tourists of crime [50]. For the tourism police to be successful it is not only how you prevent or deal with tourism related crimes, but also how you deal with each person or tourist as a customer. Thus, tourism police clearly know that good customer service is a vital element of good safety and security [19]. As a result, this reality proves the necessity to introduce Tourism Police Units in order to serve better services towards the foreign visitors and tourists in BiH and in order to improve the security of BiH's tourist environment. Keeping tourists safe, secure and informed while visiting BiH must be a necessary commitment for Tourism Police. There has been an increase of countries such as Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Greece, Jordan, the Philippines, Egypt, London, Greece, Kenya, Seoul-Korea, Libya, Nepal, Srilanka, Argentina, Republic of Dominque, Costa Rica, Peru and Vietnam introducing Tourism Police to combat crimes against tourists and provide the best security service to them [5].

Constituent parts of BiH Ministry of Security have the following administrative organizations: Direction for Coordination of Police Bodies of BiH, Border Police of BiH, State Investigation and Protection Agency, Forensic Examination and Expertise Agency, Personnel Education and Professional Development Agency, Police Support Agency, and the Service for Foreigners' Affairs [51]. The internet search shows that issues related to tourism security in BiH are generally regulated under criminal laws. There is no special unit established in Ministry of Security of BiH that provides security and safety specifically for tourists. Thus it is believed that there should be agreement on to establish a

special Tourism Police Unit to combat with tourism related crimes. Tourism Police is based on the concept that the law enforcement agencies, tourism industry, government and tourists work together in creative and strategic ways to help solve safety and security problems at tourism destinations. They are special police who work for tourists' safety and security [5]. Tourism police will not only advance tourism industry in BiH but also provide best quality security service to tourists visiting BiH. As a result, BiH authorities can increase competitiveness of BiH in the tourism sector by establishing a Tourism Police Unit.

In order to provide best quality security to the tourists visiting BiH, the Tourism Police should be set up urgently because it will be an investment in the economic future of BiH. The tourism police unit should be introduced at least in Sarajevo to help create BiH's tourism image positively since Sarajevo is mostly visited by tourists [21], it is the 43<sup>rd</sup> best city in the world [45], it is one of the top ten cities to visit in 2010 [52], it is the best city to visit in 2014 [3] and the greatest concentration of crime incidents are in Sarajevo [39,40]. Tourism Police can be a special unit of BiH Police working under the Ministry of Security and The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations in BiH. Their mission should be to take care of the welfare of tourists while they are in BiH and to help and assist tourist for their security during their visit in BiH. Tourism Police Unit can be divided into many types of patrol teams, namely; Foot Patrol, Bike Patrol, Equestrian (Mounted) Patrol, Motorcycle Patrol, Patrol Car Crew, Marine Patrol and Aviation/Air Support [5].

## **5. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOURISM POLICE**

The rationale for setting up the Tourism Police Units is to provide security and assistance to tourists by police personnel who are specially trained and briefed on tourism and to keep a check on crimes involving tourists [14]. Tourism Police should provide information and assistance to the tourists and visitors about laws, customs and culture. Tourism Police personnel should also provide visitors with assistance and information, particularly concerning native customs, culture, laws, and local attractions [5]. The main objectives, roles and functions of the Tourism Police Unit can be summarized as following:

### 5.1 Objectives of Tourism Police Unit

1. To ensure the success of the government's objective in developing the tourism industry,
2. To provide security and assistance to the local as well as international tourists,
3. To prevent and/or investigate crimes involving local and international tourists,
4. To prevent and investigate tourists from engaging in any criminal activities.

### 5.2 Role and Functions of Tourism Police Unit

1. To provide security and assistance to tourists,
2. To have an in depth knowledge of tourist destinations and attractions,
3. To provide information and guidance to tourists,
4. To ensure tourist destinations are safe for tourists and free of any criminal activities,
5. To ensure tourists are not victimized or cheated during their stay in the country,
6. To ensure tourists are informed of the local norms and customs, laws and regulations,
7. To expedite actions including investigations and prosecutions of criminal cases which involve tourists,
8. To control and prevent any unsavory activities or fraud in the tourism industry,
9. To provide and disseminate information and assistance to tourists who are involved in accidents, thefts or loss of important documents [14].
10. To inspect the institutions at the destinations for safety and security of the tourists.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is clear that tourism policing around the world will be needed more than ever [27]. Thus, an investment in tourism policing will be an investment in the economic future of BiH. If tourism police is used correctly and properly, they can become an economic development tool for the tourism industry [25]. So, Tourism Police Unit must be introduced as soon as possible to increase BiH's competitiveness in the tourism industry. In addition, BiH authorities should focus on improving BiH's reputation as a secure tourist destination and developing consensus on the necessity to introduce separate Tourism Police Units in major places such as Sarajevo, Mostar and Tuzla. The objective for BiH then is to

become one of the most visited destinations in the world.

It is also clear that partnerships between the tourism industry and police are an essential element in quality tourism services. In general, the most effective way to prevent or reduce the number of safety and security incidents happening at tourist destinations is by strong cooperation between the tourism industry, law enforcement agencies, the local community, governmental authorities, and the tourists themselves [33]. So the police and tourism industry in BiH should work together in creative ways to help solve tourism related problems in order to have more safe and secure destinations in BiH.

It is essential that the following recommendations will be taken into consideration by BiH authorities with the hope that a more secure tourism environment be created for the tourists at any destinations in BiH. The availability of a separate Tourism Police Unit at least in Sarajevo will improve the tourists' perceptions of security in BiH as feeling of insecurity is a big threat to a sustainable tourism development at destinations. With this regard, the following recommendations may be useful for government and other administrative bodies in BiH to provide tourism security:

1. A separate tourism police unit which consists of sufficient male and female officers should be established to provide security and assistance to tourists.
2. Tourism Police must be distinguished from other security/police officers by a unique and distinct uniform.
3. Tourism police need to receive training and education in how to interact with the tourism industry and how important they are in helping and protecting the industry. Educating the public about the importance of the tourism industry and tourism security is also crucial.
4. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century policing and security requires well-trained professionals who are specialists in their field. So, tourism police must be well-trained. That is to say, they will be trained to assist visitors and offer a "more welcoming" experience. They also must have high moral and ethical standards.
5. Tourism Police should be trained on how to handle crimes against and crimes committed by tourists. Namely, they should be equipped with knowledge of the unique

- crime characteristics associated with tourism.
6. There should be capacity-building for law enforcement and security officials on issues relating to crime against tourists. Enhanced training and equipment are required for the majority of police forces in BiH to deal with emerging crimes, such as cybercrime, financial crimes. Police in BiH generally suffer from a shortage of manpower and resources, both of which limits their ability to provide a comprehensive level of law enforcement support to the general public.
  7. Tourism police should be stationed in popular attractions such as monuments or tourist-heavy commercial hubs. There should be preventive and directed patrols in those areas.
  8. Tourism police should be multi-lingual and dedicated. They must have near fluency in English or any other languages.
  9. Private security officers can be used to support tourism police and to maintain tourism security as there are 169 private security companies currently operating in BiH and they have 4207 employees working for them. Private security officers can be used especially in Sarajevo as "Sarajevo has three security officers for 1,000 citizens" living there [53]. Namely, BiH should support the private security agencies and facilitate cooperation between the tourism police and private security agencies.
  10. There should be direct tourist helpline numbers to be called for help in case of any troubles that the tourists encounter.
  11. More advertising and promotion about the real security ground in BiH is needed in order to promote a realistic picture of BiH as "Bosnia and Herzegovina fails to increase tourist number because of lack of promotion" [54]. Foreign tourists are mostly from Croatia, Serbia, Italy, Turkey, Poland, Slovenia and Germany [1,3,55,56,57], which shows that most of the tourists are from nearby countries.
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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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