

# Balala calls for joint efforts against terror

*CS says insecurity widespread while travel advisories only harm affected countries*

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Kenya has criticised the move to issue travel advisories against some countries as double standards when addressing the issue of terrorism.

The advisories cause untold suffering to the tourism sector despite insecurity concerns becoming widespread throughout the world, the government noted.

"After the Paris attacks, there was a call to stay together, but when it happens elsewhere, (there is no support)," said Tourism Cabinet secretary Najib Balala during the Unctad conference yesterday. He said tourism is not just about fun but is also a business that sustains millions of people, both directly and indirectly.

While expressing regret over recent tragic acts of terrorism in Kenya, Nigeria and Europe, the CS condemned any dual approach to dealing with terrorism, saying it was bound to not only fail, but also be counterproductive.

"It is easy for them to condemn a nation, but it is not the nation's problem," he said, adding that terrorism is now a global phenomenon that should not be taken lightly.

Terrorism acts in Kenya have in the past led to several European countries and the US to call for restricted travel



Arrivals through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport rose by 13.6 per cent while Mombasa's Moi International Airport recorded a 9.8 per cent increase

**Tourism ministry will allocate Sh250 million to further marketing efforts in Africa with 60 per cent being allocated to the East African region as the country focuses to tap the continent's markets**

to the country, causing a drastic drop in tourists numbers and business.

Terrorism dealt a heavy toll on tourism with losses of up to Sh40 billion in 2014 with hotels reporting as low as 20 per cent occupancy.

In 2015, the number of visitors fell by 25 per cent in the first five months, indicating how badly the industry was damaged by a spate of Islamist militant attacks.

The number of tourists from Britain, which is Kenya's largest source market, fell by 35 per cent to 36,022 while arrivals from the United States

Tourism Cabinet secretary

**Najib Balala during a global services forum at the Unctad conference in Nairobi yesterday.**

PHOTO: HELLEN MUTURI

dropped 22 per cent.

"There is need to separate tourism from politics. It is an economic and social act," said Egypt's Tourism minister Yehia Reshid, adding that the message should be clear otherwise sustainable development cannot be achieved.

Balala, who was speaking during a services sector forum, said three out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals are fundamental to the tourism sector hence the need to boost it for growth.

Interventions and change of tact increased Kenya's tourist arrivals for the first four months by 14 per cent, compared to a similar period last year.