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# Anti-tourism protests could spread – UN

## Demonstrations have recently swept Spain, one of the world's most visited countries



Anti-tourism protest on Tenerife, Spain, April 20, 2024. © Getty Images / Andres Gutierrez

Protests against mass tourism which have recently swept Spain are expected to spread across the entire region, according to Peter DeBrine, a senior project officer for sustainable tourism at UNESCO, as cited by The Guardian.

In recent months, thousands of Spaniards have demonstrated against mass tourism in Malaga, Mallorca, Gran Canaria, Granada, and Barcelona. People from across the most popular destinations in Spain, which is ranked as the world's second most visited country, are speaking out against the tourist invasions which they say have made their cities unlivable.

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*“What we’re seeing is that we’re breaching a threshold of tolerance in these destinations,” DeBrine said. “It’s really trying to rebalance the situation. It’s totally out of balance now.”*

In July, Reuters reported, citing local police, that an anti-tourism rally in Palma de Mallorca, Spain drew around 10,000 people. One of the protesters told the news agency that people want less tourists, citing massive price hikes and the strain on public services on the island.

A housing crisis across heavily visited places could be the last straw, DeBrine said, explaining that tourism has aggravated existing concerns over the affordability of housing, as the spread of short-term accommodation squeezes local residents out of the market.

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Last month, anti-tourism protesters in Barcelona sprayed visitors with water guns and held signs reading *“Tourists go home”* and *“You are not welcome.”*

DeBrine called these actions *“extreme and not necessary,”* but said they *“won’t go away until there’s some sort of response.”* The UN official called for a paradigm shift, whereby decision-makers start taking steps to improve the lives of local residents, while warning that the risks of the protests spreading beyond Spain are considerable.

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