



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 26, 2011

Muslim Brotherhood Would Ban Bikinis, Alcohol

Despite widespread media assertions that the Egyptian revolution was intended to bring about a democratic rule, there is increasing evidence to the contrary. The Muslim Brotherhood is urging officials to consider a ban — which would particularly target tourists — on skimpy bikinis and alcohol in the streets, regulations which closely resemble Sharia law.

Muhammad Saad Al-Katatny, secretary-general of Freedom and Justice, explains, “Beach tourism must take the values and norms of our society into account. We must place regulations on tourists wishing to visit Egypt, which we will announce in advance.”



The Media Line reports:

Egypt’s tourism industry has suffered a severe blow since the outburst of anti-regime demonstrations in January. But that did not stop the Freedom and Justice Party, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, from demanding stricter regulations over what tourists can do and wear while visiting the country. The party is urging officials to ban skimpy swimwear and the consumption of alcohol on Egyptian streets.

Al-Katatny indicates that his party has already taken measures to address these issues, including setting up a subcommittee to investigate Egyptian tourism. He says the party plans to amend legislation following the parliamentary elections.

“Some slight changes will be made in public beaches, to make the situation better than it was before,” asserts youth director of Freedom and Justice in Giza, Ali Khafagy. “Bathing suits and mixing on the beach are things that go against our tradition. It’s not just a matter of religion. When I go to the beach I don’t want to see nudity.” Instead, Khafagy believes modest swimwear should be mandated.

Tourism, once a major source of revenue for the Egyptian economy, has dropped off radically in recent months as a result of the strikes and violent protests following Mubarak’s deposal. According to Finance Minister Hazem Al-Beblawi, revenue from tourism in the next financial year, which began on July 1, will likely be only \$10 billion, as opposed to the \$11.6 billion in 2009/2010.

These new strict regulations on tourist behavior will likely lower those figures even more. Hussam A-Shaer, head of the Egyptian tourist company Al-Masry al-Youm, contends, “Without alcohol and bathing suits, no tourists will come and we will lose \$13 billion a year.”

As [noted](#) by *All Headline News*, Islamists have always taken issue with foreign tourism:

Close to 60 Western tourists were killed by Islamist terrorists in the southern city of Luxor in 1997. Tourists were also attacked in bombings in the Sinai resorts of Taba,, Sharm Al-Sheikh, and Dahab in 2004, 2005, and 2006.



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The proposed restrictions highlight the debate over the role of Islam in the law of the land post-Mubarak. Polls show that Egyptians are largely in favor of greater use of Islamic law, refuting claims of a more democratic Egypt. However, there is a small minority that has voiced concerns over the proposals.

Hani Henry, psychology professor at the American University in Cairo, explains,

This is how things began in Iran. The moderate youth wanted to implement changes, but the mullahs hijacked the revolution. The same thing is now happening here in Egypt with the Muslim Brotherhood. It makes me sick to my stomach.

But the restrictions may not be limited to just bathing suits and alcohol. Abd Al-Munim A-Shahhat, a spokesman for the Salafi group Dawa, contends that Egypt's pharaonic archaeology — which includes the pyramids and other well known monuments — should be hidden from the public, as they are covered with imagery that is un-Islamic. Comparing the Egyptian relics to the idols of pre-Islamic times, A-Shahhat claims, "The pharaonic culture is a rotten culture [and] should be covered with wax, since they are religiously forbidden."

However, even Al-Katatny does not support that proposal; he insists that the Muslim Brotherhood believes Egypt's archeology should be protected. "This heritage belongs to everyone, and one can't simply remove something he doesn't like," he observed.

In an effort to save the tourism industry in Egypt, the Coalition to Support Tourism has been established, which includes a number of organizations relevant to the travel industry. The Coalition's Facebook page reads, "Some parties want to ban tourism, or allow it while banning alcohol, certain foods and certain clothes. [A couple] renting a room will require documents proving they are married. These proposals don't bode well, as many of you know."



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