

Thai Locals Say Israeli Tourists Unwelcome Over Misconduct

BANKOK (Dispatches) -- After months of enduring Israeli tourists snatching his restaurant’s tissues and condiments without permission, hogging seats without paying, and skipping lines, Bob reached his breaking point and decided to no longer welcome them.

Having worked all his life in the hospitality industry, he had never come across such behavior by visitors to the island. Each time he tried to intervene, he was faced with a wave of negative reviews hitting his establishment.

“After I asked one group of Israeli tourists to leave, I received more than 4,000 bad reviews — my restaurant’s rating dropped from 4.8 to 2.2 stars. It’s now been corrected, but that experience was really frustrating,” Bob told Arab News.

In October, his restaurant, Pun Pun Thai Food, a popular establishment on Koh Phangan, a holiday island in southern Thailand, put up a sign making it clear that Israelis were not allowed even past the threshold.

“I hate the repeated behavior I’ve encountered from many Israeli tourists — it happens so often that it led me to put up a ‘No Israel’ sign at my restaurant,” Bob said.



A restaurant on Koh Phangan island, Thailand, displays a ‘No Israel’ sign amid rising tensions with Israeli tourists, October 2025.

“What I’ve experienced isn’t just from one person — it happens repeatedly.”

Over the past few months, such incidents have been increasingly highlighted by the locals, who started to record and share them on social media. In May, an Israeli woman went viral after a Koh Phangan restaurant employee requested that she leave for not respecting the establishment’s rules.

The employee could be heard saying: “You’re not welcome here,” to which the woman replied: “My money builds your country.”

Besides the nuisance that such behavior has become for them, lo-

cals are also worried about tourists competing with their businesses by renting out houses, running restaurants, organizing tours, or operating motorbike rental shops without permission.

A group of business owners and island residents recently filed a petition with more than 200 signatures, submitted to the governor of the Surat Thani province, urging action against what they described as “Israeli activities causing distress to local communities.”

Apiwat Sriwatcharaporn, assistant village chief in Koh Phangan, acknowledged the growing concern over foreigners running unli-

censed business operations on the island.

“If they just live or travel here, that’s fine,” he said. “But business operations should be done legally.”

According to Thailand’s Immigration Bureau, as of late September, there were 2,627 Israeli applying for visa extensions on the island, out of about 8,000 total foreigners, making Israelis the largest group under scrutiny for potential illegal commercial activity.

Tan, whose family has been operating a business in Koh Phangan, said problems with Israeli visitors are not new. But lately, they have become more noticeable, as more and more of them are visiting.

Some organizations have also brought Israeli terrorist soldiers for rehabilitation in Thailand. According to reports in the Thai state media, some of these groups have been directly linked to the Israeli military industry.

“This has led to fears among locals about why they are here and what they are doing,” Aree said.

“The government’s intention to boost tourism has backfired, creating unintended negative consequences.”

Three Afghans Among Four Killed in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABD (Dispatches) -- Police in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province said that four people, including three Afghan nationals, were killed during a gun battle with security forces in Peshawar.

Officials said the group had long been on the police wanted list for armed robberies and was tracked down after intelligence reports indicated their presence in the area. The suspects allegedly opened fire when officers arrived, prompting police to return fire.

According to police, the gang had been active since 2003,

often disguising themselves as officers to commit robberies. They were reportedly behind the recent theft of millions of rupees and jewelry from a doctor’s home.

Senior officer Masood Ahmed Bangash told Geo News that all suspects were identified and confirmed that three were Afghan nationals. He added the group was wanted in multiple cities, including Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Nowshera.

Authorities recovered several weapons and motorcycles from the scene, including assault ri-

fles, pistols, and ammunition, adding that forensic examinations are underway.

The incident has stirred concern among Afghan refugee communities in Pakistan, who fear rising stigmatization amid increasing security operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Human rights groups have urged authorities not to conflate criminal cases with the broader refugee population.

Pakistan currently hosts more than 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees and an estimated 600,000 undocumented migrants. Tensions have escalated

in recent months as Islamabad intensifies deportations, citing security concerns and border instability.

The Taliban’s embassy in Islamabad has not commented on the deaths of the three Afghan nationals. The clash comes amid growing diplomatic and security strains between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Observers warn that incidents like this may further complicate already fragile ties between the two neighbors and heighten the uncertainty facing Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.

Iraq’s Foreign Minister Calls for Disarmament of PKK Elements

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- Iraq’s Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein on Sunday called on Kurdish separatists who have withdrawn to the country’s north after waging a decades-long insurgency in Turkey to disarm.

Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, began laying down its arms in July in a symbolic cer-

emony in northern Iraq after withdrawing its fighters from Turkey to Iraq as part of a peace effort with Ankara.

But armed “PKK elements” remain in northern Iraq, notably in Sinjar and Makhmur, according to Hussein.

Speaking during a joint news conference in Baghdad with his

Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan, Hussein said: “We support the agreement between Turkey and the PKK and look forward to the implementation of this agreement and the resolution of the PKK issue.”

He said the matter of the “PKK elements” in northern Iraq was discussed with Fidan.

Turkey hopes that the PKK will end its armed operations in Iraq and withdraw from there, as well as in parts of Iran and Syria, Fidan said.

“We are working closely with Iraq, and I thank both Iraq and the Kurdistan region for their cooperation in this regard,” he said.

Syria’s HTS Leader Jolani to Visit Washington Soon

MANAMA (Dispatches) – Syria’s self-proclaimed president, Abu Muhammad al-Jolani, leader of Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a group previously linked to Al-Qaeda and Daesh, is scheduled to visit Washington in early November, according to his foreign minister, Asaad al-Shaibani.

The trip is set to mark the first official visit to the United States by a Syrian authority.

Speaking at a panel during the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain on Sunday, Shaibani said the visit would cover a range of topics, beginning with the potential lifting of remaining U.S. sanctions on Syria.

“Many topics will be discussed, start-

ing with the lifting of sanctions,” he said. The HTS foreign ministry in Damascus confirmed the planned trip, highlighting its unprecedented nature.

On Saturday, U.S. envoy to Syria Tom Barrack indicated that Jolani’s visit is also aimed at formalizing Syria’s participation in what he described as an international alliance against Daesh.

The announcement has drawn attention due to Jolani’s history as a former commander in groups previously linked to global terrorist networks, raising questions about Washington’s engagement with figures long considered adversaries.

Jolani’s upcoming visit will be his second to the United States, following a trip to New York earlier this year, when he addressed the UN General Assembly.

Analysts suggest the initiative reflects broader inconsistencies in U.S. policy toward Syria, which has seen years of interventions that have destabilized the country, contributed to the rise of militant groups, and left the nation vulnerable to chronic insecurity.

Observers note that former militants now holding diplomatic roles illustrate the complexities and contradictions of regional politics, as the U.S. engages with actors it once opposed.

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scientists, he added, should expand their expertise to areas such as water, agriculture, and environmental management.

“Ultimately, it is up to us to decide how to use our resources, what to produce, and how to distribute it,” Pezeshkian said, stressing that national experts are key to achieving these goals.

The president reaffirmed that nuclear energy is primarily a tool for human development and national welfare.

“Only a tiny fraction of this field’s heterogeneous and non-humanitarian consequences involve bomb-making, while the rest serves the fundamental needs of humanity,” he said.

“Our goal in expanding this industry is to meet the needs of our people and enhance national welfare, not to produce weapons.”

Pezeshkian emphasized the government’s commitment to fully supporting the peaceful expansion of Iran’s nuclear industry. He said that with continued effort and careful planning, Iran could secure a larger share of the global market, while expressing appreciation for the scientists’ work.

“The future of our country depends on staying at the forefront of knowledge and advancing new technologies,” he said.

20,000... (Continued From Page One)

He also underscored the continuity of Bushehr’s second and third units, which were developed even during the short-lived Iran-Iraq War, noting that the project is proceeding steadily.

Since 2021, he added, Iran has accelerated the commercialization of nuclear technology projects to create mechanisms that allow citizens to engage more directly with nuclear energy and its applications.

Eslami emphasized that the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran is implementing its strategic nuclear industry plan through 2040.

“We are now in the third year of executing this roadmap, aiming to achieve the production of 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity,” he said. He noted that several feasibility studies have been conducted to achieve this target, a goal endorsed by Iran’s Supreme Leader in 2007.

The head of Iran’s nuclear agency described the 20,000-megawatt initiative as economically viable, with financial returns embedded within the project itself. “If this project is well-managed, investors will welcome it, and it can be successfully implemented,” Eslami said.

Eslami also stressed the importance of providing public services alongside nuclear power expansion. As part of the projects, desalination plants are being constructed to supply potable water to local communities.

He highlighted the Bushehr desalination project, which is expected to reach a first-phase capacity of 70,000 cubic meters per day next year.

In addition to energy production, Eslami highlighted Iran’s efforts in nuclear applications for health, food security, industry, and the environment.

He pointed to the importance of emerging technologies, including quantum research, laser development, and nuclear fusion, which he described as “fields of immense potential.”

He warned that lagging in these areas could expose the country to challenges and external interference, similar to the scrutiny faced by the nuclear sector.

“We have resolved to pursue these fields more seriously and rapidly,” he said, emphasizing plans to train university professors and attract students in quantum and fusion disciplines, which he described as “future-building” fields that will meet current and future national needs.

Eslami said the government’s strategy aims to ensure that Iran not only achieves energy self-sufficiency but also maintains technological leadership in critical and advanced scientific domains.

He emphasized the importance of continuity, investment, and education to ensure that Iran’s nuclear sector meets both immediate energy needs and long-term scientific and industrial goals.

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Larijani outlined a strategy of national resistance, grounded in economic reform.

“Bringing the enemy to reason cannot be done through unconditional concessions. The correct path to reshape the rivals’ mindset is to strengthen national unity, and the prerequisite is economic reform to restore stability to the lives of the people,” he said.

He stressed that this approach requires both domestic cohesion and careful management of economic policies to counter foreign pressure while maintaining Iran’s sovereignty.