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Nuclear Weapons Will Keep Russian Tourists Safe, Says North Korean Official

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North Korea has opened its first official tourist agency in Russia saying tourists are guaranteed safety by the isolated country's nuclear arsenal.

The Pyongyang-approved NKOREAN tour agency will be working together with the North Korean Embassy in Russia to promote Russian tourism to the region, the Interfax news agency reported Thursday. The all-inclusive tours will last between 4 to 15 days and will cost from 51,000 rubles($860) upwards.

"North Korea is one of the safest countries in the world, and guarantees the safety of tourists who respect the law and order of the country," North Korean Embassy aide Kim Sen Khun was cited as saying by Interfax.

He added that North Korea's nuclear weapons "fully guarantee safety and peace on the Korean peninsula."

The ambassador also announced a simplified visa procedure for Russian citizens, which would reduce waiting times from up to three weeks to between three and five days.

"There's a category of tourists who are interested in going there to experience socialism," Irina Tyurina, a spokesperson for Russia's Tourism Union, was cited as saying by Interfax. "There are not many of them," she said, adding 423 Russian tourists visited North Korea in 2016.

The announcement comes just one week before a U.S. travel ban to North Korea is set to go into effect.

The measure applies to all Americans except journalists and humanitarian workers and was introduced earlier this month after an American student died under mysterious circumstances after being incarcerated there.

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