

Charity joins government campaign to help keep British tourists safe

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A charity set up in the aftermath of the 2015 Tunisia terror attack has become an official partner of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's Travel Aware campaign which gives British tourists information to help them have a safe trip abroad.

Smile For Joel has long campaigned for holidaymakers to be made aware of potential risks when travelling abroad and now carries a whole host of advice, information and links on its website for travellers to easily access.

The charity was set up following the terrorist attack in Tunisia in June, 2015, when 38 tourists were killed. Among the victims were Joel Richards, aged 19, from Wednesbury in the West Midlands, his uncle Adrian and grandfather Pat.

Joel's younger brother Owen survived the attack and he and his mother Suzy Evans set up the charity to support other families torn apart by murder and violence.

Suzy is also passionate about raising awareness of how people can stay safe when they travel overseas. "With Joel, Pat and Ade, nobody told them about a risk of terrorism in Tunisia, and no-one told them they should check," she said. "If they had known there was an increased risk, they would never have gone.

"When you book a holiday, you might get notifications that a pool or restaurant is closed, but you don't automatically get notified if there is a change in the risk of a terror attack.

"The industry needs to be more transparent and tour operators should do more to draw people's attention to where they can find this information before they book a holiday."

Suzy said she hoped joining forces with Travel Aware would help bring more attention to the fact that this advice is freely available and updated regularly, if travellers know where to look.

"It's all there on GOV.UK, you can even sign up for travel advice notifications so that you know whenever there is an update," she said.

"Our website is now a central point where we carry information and advice and signpost people to all the latest official guidance.

"People need to know the risks before they travel. We do not want any other family to go through what we have experienced. If we can save one life then it will be worth it."

Travel advice on GOV.UK also carries information for travellers on local laws and customs, visa and passport rules, travel insurance and any remaining Covid restrictions.

Jennifer Anderson, Director of Consular Services at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, said:

"I am delighted that Smile for Joel has become a Travel Aware partner and welcome the support they will give in helping British people prepare for travelling and staying safe abroad.

"I encourage anyone thinking of travelling abroad to check our travel advice on GOV.UK for the latest information on their destination and to subscribe to updates."

Smile For Joel has a number of fundraising events taking place this year, including Run For Joel on June 11, Climb For Joel at the O2 in London on May 13 and a black tie ball on November 11.

To find out more about the charity, visit smileforjoel.com

The government's foreign travel advice for over 200 countries and territories can be found at gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

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