



## **USTOA MEMBER COMPANIES SUCCESSFULLY EVACUATE TRAVELERS FROM EGYPT**

Travelers Benefit from Safety Net and Expert Help in Times of Crisis

**New York, NY – February 3, 2011**—The U.S. Tour Operators Association reports that its member companies have successfully evacuated scores of guests from Egypt, getting them home safely and providing alternate travel arrangements.

“At the outset of demonstrations last week, USTOA member companies responded immediately, going to extraordinary lengths to handle the crisis. Member companies coordinated arrangements for their clients to get them out of harm’s way, overcoming numerous challenges. Obstacles included dealing with curfews, restricted telecommunications, and across-the-board airline cancellations,” said Terry Dale, the association’s president.

Member companies worked in cooperation with their local Egyptian offices, representatives and support staff, along with security experts and crisis management personnel to coordinate evacuations. Quick and timely actions to ensure passenger safety included securing complimentary housing, moving guests to other hotels after protests started, chartering flights, providing daily and hourly briefings when possible, and positioning staff at hotels where guests were staying, to care for their needs and organize flights.

Examples include:

- Successfully rerouting clients to other countries when U.S. flights were cancelled or unavailable, thereby arranging for a seamless trip home;
- Providing hotels, transfers, guides and meals, and personally caring for rerouted customers who had to overnight;
- Moving guests on Nile cruises and those in the center of Cairo to hotels near Cairo airport to facilitate their departure as flights became available, staying by their side up to departure;
- Keeping in close contact with clients’ loved ones so that they would be aware that their family and friends were safe and en route home;
- Deploying tour managers’ and ground operators’ personal cell phones and using emergency lines to text new flight plans and contact loved ones;
- Arranging for charter flights, in some cases at the member company’s expense, and State Department flights when necessary.

“While the Egypt situation is front-page today, we live in a world where travelers face unforeseen crises that can erupt at any time, anywhere in the world,” notes Dale. In addition to political incidents, he cites natural disasters such as last year’s Icelandic volcano eruption, floods in Peru, and earthquakes in Chile, among others. In each case, USTOA member tour operators and vacation packagers have delivered huge benefits to their guests above and beyond the call of duty, he notes.

“In times of crisis, travelers who book with a USTOA member company have the benefit of experienced travel experts whose infrastructure on the ground helps to ensure their safety and well-being, compared to traveling on their own.” said Dale.

For a list of USTOA member companies serving Egypt, visit [http://bit.ly/USTOA\\_Egypt](http://bit.ly/USTOA_Egypt). For more information on USTOA and for a list of its member companies, visit: [www.USTOA.com](http://www.USTOA.com), or [www.USTOA.travel](http://www.USTOA.travel). USTOA member companies have met the travel industry’s highest standards, including participation in the association’s Travelers Assistance Program, which among other things protects consumer payments up to \$1 million in case the company goes out of business. USTOA is the premier association of companies providing vacation packages, tours, and custom travel itineraries for more than 11 million people yearly.

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