MADRID, Spain. – The arrival of tourists to Cuba this past May dropped 12.2% in comparison to the month of April. According to the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI, by its Spanish acronym), 133,281 foreigners visited Cuba in April, while only 117,000 did so in May.

Economist Pedro Monreal explained through Twitter that the statistics reflect “mainly a 32% contraction in the number of visitors from Cuba’s largest tourist market (Canada)” and “this trajectory corresponds to the usual cyclical flow of tourism in Cuba.”

According to the statistics, the arrival of international travelers between January and May rose 640% in inter-annual terms with the arrival of 564,847 tourists. This number includes travelers who came to Cuba for personal as well as business reasons.
However, these statistics are far from the government’s prediction of welcoming 2.5 million tourists in 2022.

Monreal specified that, taking into consideration the 564,847 tourists, another 2 million visitors are pending if the official goal is to be attained.

The report from the National Office of Statistics and Information also indicated that in the course of this year, it’s Canadians who have most travelled to Cuba (182,733), followed by Cubans who reside abroad (121,285).

Compared to the same period in 2021, the increase in both groups reached above 1,000%.

Although the tourism sector, one of the principal sources of hard currency for Cuba, hasn’t quite yet recovered since the opening of its borders last November 15th, Cuban authorities continue to insist on reaching its goal of 2.5 million visitors in 2022.

Last March, Minister of Tourism, Juan Carlos García Granda, indicated that “one of the biggest challenges in the sector is the level of professionalism and the quality of the Cuban tourism product, which incentivizes personalized attention to the client and perfecting linguistic abilities.”

Cuban authorities aim to end the year 2022 with 84,906 hotel guest rooms.

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