# Egypt invests $51 million to improve visitor experience and animal welfare at the Pyramids of Giza



Egypt is undertaking a significant refurbishment of one of the world’s most renowned landmarks, the Pyramids of Giza, in an effort to enhance the experience for the millions of tourists who visit annually. The site, a UNESCO World Heritage location, sees over 14 million visitors each year but has faced growing criticism regarding visitor management, vendor behaviour, and animal treatment, leading many to feel their visit falls short of expectations.

A $51 million (£38 million) project spearheaded by Orascom Pyramids Entertainment Services Company aims to address these concerns through a series of improvements. Among the planned initiatives is the introduction of 45 electric buses to transport visitors around the site on a frequent schedule, operating every five minutes to alleviate congestion and improve circulation.

Other enhancements include the development of a modern online ticketing system to streamline entry, an upgraded visitor centre offering better facilities and information, and the restoration of ancient tombs to preserve and showcase the historic site more effectively, according to a report by the Express.

Naguib Sawiris, founder of Orascom Telecom Holding and Orascom Investment Holding, commented on the issues contributing to the detriment of the visitor experience. Speaking on the platform X, Sawiris described the conduct of roughly 2,000 camel and horse riders as ‘offensive’ and noted the disruption caused by their presence on the tourist bus routes. He highlighted the pollution caused by animal waste, which detracts from the site’s archaeological significance. Sawiris stated: “The disruption of the continuous tourist bus route, the horse and camel manure and their foul-smelling waste that offends and pollutes the most important archaeological site in the world make the visit a very bad experience.”

He further emphasised a plan to relocate vendors, asserting that those who refuse to move to newly established zones near an exercise area should be banned altogether to protect the historic environment. Sawiris explained: “The solution is that they must go to the exercise area as planned by the state and stay away from the asphalt bus route to avoid obstructing tourists. In case of refusal, they should be completely prevented in order to preserve this historical area, as the public good is more important than 2,000 people who have been harming their country for years.”

Concerns about the treatment of animals used for tourist rides have been brought to wider attention by the animal rights organisation PETA. Their investigation alleges serious mistreatment of camels and horses at the site, including abuse such as beating, starvation, and neglect resulting in deaths. Jason Baker, Vice President of PETA Asia, said: “PETA has documented the routine punching, kicking, whipping, and starving of horses and camels at the pyramids. Animals are literally ridden to death and then dumped like rubbish outside the gate. The Pyramids of Giza should symbolise Egypt’s beauty and history – not unchecked animal abuse.”

This issue has also led to high-profile incidents, such as a recent confrontation involving a Dutch expat, Joke Van der Post, who manages the animal sanctuary Good Karma Sanctuary. Disturbed by witnessing the beating of a donkey near Cairo, she physically intervened, resulting in a viral video showing her punching the donkey’s handler and chasing him with a whip as he fled. The footage shows the donkey in visible distress, repeatedly lashed while tethered.

Following the altercation, the man filed a police report accusing Ms Van der Post of assault, claiming that the widespread circulation of the video caused him psychological harm, according to local media coverage.

The ongoing upgrades and reforms at the Pyramids of Giza reflect a concerted effort by Egyptian authorities and private partners to both preserve the historic site and improve the conditions for visitors and animals alike. The developments seek to modernise infrastructure while addressing longstanding criticisms relating to site management and welfare concerns.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2025/04/24/egypt-travel-pyramids-of-giza-revamp-project-hopes-to-curb-congestion-and-aggressive-vendo> - Details Egypt's Pyramids of Giza revamp project aiming to reduce congestion and address aggressive vendor behavior as part of visitor experience improvements.
* [https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1238/536824/Egypt/Tourism/Farewell-to-Pyramids-chaos,--a-new-look-for-the-Gi.aspx](https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1238/536824/Egypt/Tourism/Farewell-to-Pyramids-chaos%2C--a-new-look-for-the-Gi.aspx) - Confirms the Giza Plateau's $51 million renovation led by Orascom Pyramids Entertainment to create an organized tourist experience by February 2025, including infrastructure upgrades.
* <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2025/04/24/egypt-travel-pyramids-of-giza-revamp-project-hopes-to-curb-congestion-and-aggressive-vendo> - Mentions vendor protests against relocation to new zones, corroborating efforts to manage vendor presence through designated areas.
* <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2025/04/24/egypt-travel-pyramids-of-giza-revamp-project-hopes-to-curb-congestion-and-aggressive-vendo> - Supports the claim of transportation improvements (e.g., electric buses) and congestion reduction strategies at the site.
* <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/01/egypt-pyramid-renovation-sparks-debate> - Discusses broader renovation controversies, highlighting public debates over site management challenges that align with reported criticisms.
* <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/egypt-scrapes-pyramid-renovation-2437684> - Indicates historical friction around renovation projects (e.g., Menkaure Pyramid) but does not directly corroborate specific claims about current animal welfare or vendor relocation.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14655513/Egypts-Pyramids-undergo-38m-revamp.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data