

Venice Faces Irreversible Damage Warning

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. threat (noun) - a danger or warning of harm
Example: The email contained a threat to release sensitive information.
2. stark warning (noun) - a clear and strong alert or caution
Example: The government issued a stark warning about the approaching hurricane.
3. stem (verb) - to arise, originate or come from
Example: Most of her health problems stem from an accident she had when she was younger.
4. vulnerability (noun) - a state of being easily hurt, damaged, or attacked
Example: The castle's weak walls were a vulnerability during the siege.
5. establish (verb) - to create, set up, or start something
Example: The company plans to establish a new branch in the city.
6. resolution (noun) - a firm decision or determination to do something
Example: She made a resolution to exercise regularly and improve her health.



Venice, a beautiful city in Italy, faces a serious and “unchangeable” **threat** due to the combined impacts of climate change, tourism, and extensive construction projects. The United Nations cultural agency, UNESCO, has issued a **stark warning**, suggesting that Venice be included on its "World Heritage in Danger" list. This decision **stems** from the recognition that Venice is suffering harm from both human activities and "natural transformations."

The **vulnerability** of Venice, often referred to as "The Floating City," to rising sea levels is a critical concern. The devastating floods in 2019 resulted in approximately \$1 billion in damages. Although a flood defense system was completed the following year, some locals chose to abandon Venice after this disastrous event. However, it's not only floods that are prompting residents to leave; the city welcomes nearly 28 million tourists annually, while the population of its famous old town has decreased to only about 50,000 residents.

The arrival of tourists, many of whom visit for just a day, has had a significant impact on Venice. Furthermore, the rise of Airbnb rentals in properties that were once occupied by Venetians has further decreased the availability of housing for local residents. While Venice was initially designated as a World Heritage site in 1987, this marks the second time it has been recommended for addition in the "blacklist," indicating the need for substantial changes to protect the city.

In 2019, Venice's mayor, Luigi Brugnaro, begged UNESCO to place the city on the "World Heritage in Danger" list, expressing doubt in the Italian government's ability to **establish** essential protective measures. Although large cruise ships were banned from the lagoon nearby to the old city in 2021, the proposed city tax for day-trip visitors has faced extended delays and remains unimplemented. UNESCO is scheduled to make a final **resolution** regarding Venice's status in September.

DISCUSSION

1. How can cities like Venice balance the preservation of their cultural heritage with the demands of tourism?
2. What are the potential consequences of over-tourism in historic cities, and how can they be mitigated?
3. How might climate change impact other coastal cities around the world, and what measures can be taken to address these challenges?
4. Discuss the role of UNESCO in preserving and protecting cultural heritage sites globally. Are there any other initiatives that could be effective?
5. Imagine you are a resident of Venice. How would you feel about the city's situation, and what actions would you take to address its challenges?
6. In your opinion, should large cruise ships be allowed near historic and environmentally sensitive areas? Why or why not?
7. Venice is often romanticized as a tourist destination. What other aspects of the city's culture and history should visitors be encouraged to explore and appreciate?