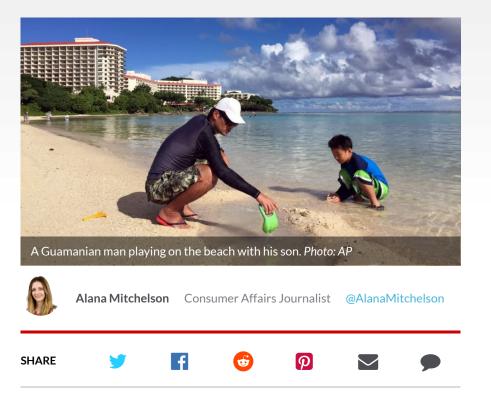


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## 'Business as usual' in Guam despite the spectre of war



As Guam makes international headlines after North Korea's leader threatened the US island with a missile attack, its people have remained calm but cautious, maintaining a "business as usual" attitude.

While the world holds its breath in the face of a **possible nuclear conflict**, Guam residents – among the territory's population of 163,000 – told *The New Daily* they maintain the utmost confidence in the military. Mindy Aguon a mother of two and reporter with The Guam

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"I feel safe. But it's difficult for my six and eight-year-old," the 37-year-old said.

"They see the word 'Guam' all over the TV and the word 'missile'. And images ... It's a conversation that no parent wants to have with their child.

"I just reassured them that the military are protecting us and that we have defences in place. If children see their parents are calm, they feel a bit more reassured.



Tumon Bay, Guam, is a popular tourist destination. *Photo: AP* 

"Everyone is praying for the best."

*The Guam Daily Post* reported that the Guam Department of Education said schools have emergency-response plans in place.

Ms Aguon, who has lived in Guam for 21 years, said that while some people were a bit concerned, she felt very safe.

"This is not something new for Guam, we've been a target before," she said. "The local government is doing a good job to assure the public

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#### **Tourism unaffected**

Ms Aguon added that tourism numbers had reached an all-time high in July, with August appearing to follow a similar trend.

She said it was currently peak tourism season, and that Guam attracted about 1.5 million tourists every year.

"We have thousands of tourists right now, with the majority from South Korea and Japan," Ms Aguon said.

"There haven't been a lot of cancellations. Guam is a safe destination."

This was confirmed by Dusit Thani Guam Resort general manager Dean Huntsman, who told *The New Daily* the hotel had experienced "only a handful of cancellations".

"The direct impact to our business has been minimal. Arrivals on the whole are optimistic," he said.

"The people of Guam are extremely resilient. While there is a sense of concern, overall we have maintained a positive outlook.

"The people of Guam don't want a proliferation of weapons, we want to see peace."

#### 'Business as usual'

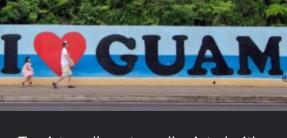
Administration officer at The Plaza Guam, Mylene Dimalanta, said businesses at the shopping centre have continued trading throughout the ordeal.

She said she sees many tourists visiting the plaza.

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Tourists walk past a wall painted with the slogan 'I love Guam'. *Photo: AFP/Getty* 

"Everything is normal. It's all calm over here," Ms Dimalanta said.

"Nobody's panicking right now. Some international media have been around asking questions – I think some media reports are making people more worried.

"The military are here protecting us and making us feel safe. And I do believe the military will protect us. If it does happen, we are ready ... but I don't think anything is going to happen.

"I pray that everything will cool down."

Late last week, North Korea <u>detailed a plan</u> to launch a volley of four ballistic missiles near the island of Guam "within a week".

The North Korean official news agency reported on Tuesday that leader Kim Jong-un ordered his army to be "fire ready" but to first watch the actions of the US before acting on his plans.

Then on Tuesday afternoon (AEST), the news agency released a statement saying that Kim had decided against an August attack, appearing to genuinely want a de-escalation of the tensions.

But Kim warned he could still order a missile launch aimed near





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