

## Like Vegas, but worse': Sharm el-Sheikh fails to charm Cop27 delegates

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With its jarring mix of sun-drenched luxury resorts, overt authoritarianism, apocalyptic climate warnings and sub-Arctic air conditioning, Sharm el-Sheikh has so far proved a challenging and confounding venue for the Cop27 climate talks.

The Egyptian resort town, perched on the edge of the Sinai peninsula overlooking the Red Sea, has long been a draw for tourists and there are still groups of Italian and Russian holidaymakers relaxing to thumping Europop, in a place studded by gaudy hotels and attractions that include a fake Roman amphitheatre, large model dinosaurs and a replica pyramid. "It's like being in Las Vegas, but somehow worse," muttered one Swedish Cop delegate.

For Cop delegates, however, the experience has often been bewildering as they funnel into the cavernous venue, the Tonino Lamborghini International Convention Center, a place that has at various times lacked food, water, internet connection or a bearable temperature between the blazing sunshine outside and the frigid temperatures generated indoors by hulking air conditioning units that resemble plane engines.

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There have been other oddities. There is a dearth of maps and signage at the venue, leading to long, confused treks in search of national pavilions, or a toilet. Organisers' good intentions in promoting recycling and a fleet of electric buses to transport delegates has resulted in rubbish being piled into recycling bins and lengthy traffic jams.

More serious issues abound outside the venue. The authoritarian regime of Abdel Fatah al-Sisi has sought to quell any sort of dissent that may erupt at Cop beyond generalised climate protests.....