Britain relaxes restrictions on travel to Sri Lanka

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Colombo, July 3 (DPA) The British government has relaxed travel restrictions on its citizens visiting Sri Lanka nearly five weeks after Tamil separatist rebels were defeated to end a more then 30-year war in the South Asian country, the British high commission in Colombo said Friday.

Britain, which had imposed restrictions for its citizens to some of the popular tourist destinations on the southern and eastern coasts of the country, said in a statement that it would no longer discourage British people from visiting those areas. "I am pleased to announce that we have relaxed the restrictions on travel suggested in the advice we give to British visitors coming to Sri Lanka," British High Commissioner Peter Hayes said. Britain would no longer discourage British holidaymakers from going leopard spotting at Yala National Park in southern Sri Lanka, surfing at Arugam Bay in eastern Sri Lanka or visiting Trincomalee harbour in northeastern Sri Lanka, one of the world's deepest natural ports, Hayes said. Earlier, the Sri Lankan government expressed disappointment that foreign countries were not relaxing their travel advisories on Sri Lanka despite the end of the war. Tamil rebels, who were fighting mainly in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka for a separate homeland for the Tamil ethnic minority, also had been responsible for attacks in other parts of the country, including the capital, Colombo, prompting several foreign countries to issue travel advisories.

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