The study of tourist destination risk perception has gained considerable visibility during the last decade. Clearly, the fragile geo-political situation in numerous parts of the world; the breakdown of global threatening epidemics as well as the influx of terror activities raise the interest in this issue beyond the academic sphere. For some destinations, the issue of security and safety has become a major concern of policy makers and legislators, as well as of concerned marketing and business leaders (Pizam and Mansfeld 1996). These concerns are magnified in the case of destinations that are perpetually threatened and affected by geo-political unrest and acts of terror. For such volatile destinations, understanding the risk perception of tourists might assist in the formulation of marketing strategies that will consider the various dimensions of risk perceptions and consequently will mitigate some of the travel psychological barriers.

The study of destination risk perception seems to be partial without taking into consideration the motives for the visit, as well as the mechanisms or "strategies" through which risk perceptions are reduced and mitigated. This scenario has been the focus of numerous tourism marketing and management studied situation. In essence, the focus is usually on a situation where a consumer decides to purchase a ticket or a package to a destination with a particular mix of risks. However, it is much more challenging to examine destination risk perception, risk reduction strategies as well as the particular motives of tourists who choose to return to a risky destination. The current study assumes that destination risk perception, tourist risk reduction strategies and particular motives for the visit vary significantly between first time visitors vs. repeat visitors. This comparison between first time and repeat visitors is of special interest when conducted in the context of "chronically" volatile destinations.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to compare between first time visitors and repeat visitors in a highly volatile environment in terms of destination risk
perception, risk reduction strategies and motives for visiting that particular destination.

Taking place in Israel, a highly volatile tourist destination, 760 international tourists were interviewed by means of a questionnaire and later classified into first time visitors vs. repeat visitors. First time visitors were characterized by "human-induced" risk; "socio-psychological" risk and "food safety and weather" risk. On the other hand, their counterparts were associated with the destination risk factors of "financial risk"; "service quality" risk; and "natural disaster and car accidents" risk factor. First time visitors were also characterized by a wide variety of risk reduction means such as consulting with people who had previously visited destinations; gathering information from travel agents; searching for information from friends and relatives; and choosing a popular destination. In contrast, repeated visitors were associated mainly with making decisions in cooperation and taking an inexpensive trip. Differences were also found in terms of motivations for the visit.

The various destination risk factors, risk reduction strategies and motivation within the different segments serve as a basis for formulating marketing strategies aimed at attracting potential tourists.