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Cruise Ship With 6,000 Passengers Prevented From Docking in Jamaica

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MSC Meraviglia

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – A cruise line with over 6,000 people on board was on Tuesday denied access to the port of call in Ocho Rios, St. Ann, Jamaica on the island’s north coast after one of the crew members had been placed in isolation.

A brief government statement said that the MSC Meraviglia cruise ship, which arrived here at approximately 8.30 am (local time) with 4,500 passengers and a crew of more than 1,600, had been inspected by the Port Health officials where “it was discovered that a crew member was placed in isolation on board.

“The crew member had a cough, fever and associated muscle pains with a travel history to a country of interest relating to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19),” the statement said.

The public relations and advocate officer at the North East Regional Health Authority, Angenice Whyte, told the Gleaner newspaper that “we saw that there was somebody there who is in quarantine because that person came from the Philippines and the 14 days have not elapsed.

“They have that person in quarantine but that was not told to us before the ship docked, so as part of our public health standard and regulation handed down by the Ministry of Health on how we deal with communicable diseases, we did not allow persons to leave the ship,” Whyte added.

She said currently there is no Coronavirus threat to Jamaica or Jamaicans as no one from the ship has been allowed to leave and there is a possibility that no passenger or crew member will be allowed on land.

The vessel, which arrived here from Miami is scheduled to continue its Caribbean cruise, heading firstly to Grand Cayman, then to Cozumel in Mexico and The Bahamas.

Last month, several Caribbean countries refused to allow a cruise liner to dock after some of the passengers had been placed in quarantine for fear of the spread of the deadly coronavirus that has more than 2,700 people mainly in China.