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State Department Warns Americans Against Travel Abroad As Coronavirus Pandemic Spreads

Travel / **Published On March 12, 2020 03:52 AM /**

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The U.S. Department of State has elevated its travel advisory to level 3, advising U.S. citizens on Wednesday to reconsider travel abroad due to the global impact of COVID-19. "Many areas throughout the world are now experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and taking action that may limit traveler mobility, including quarantines and border restrictions. Even countries, jurisdictions, or areas where cases have not been reported may restrict travel without notice," the State Department warned.

Earlier Wednesday, President Donald Trump announced a 30-day ban on some travel from Europe into the U.S. and said he would move to offer financial assistance to those affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The president, addressing the nation from the Oval Office, said the suspension would commence on Friday at 11:59 p.m. and would not include the United Kingdom. The president had suggested that the restrictions would also apply to cargo, but the White House later said the restrictions applied only to people.

The Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday night said the president signed a proclamation that applies to most foreign nationals who have been in any of 26 European countries during the 14 days before their scheduled U.S. arrival.

D.H.S. said the ban applies to Schengen Area countries — a zone without border restrictions where foreigners from outside Europe can travel freely. Notably, the U.K., which is not part of the Schengen Area, was not part of the 30-day ban. [According to the BBC](#), the U.K. had 460 confirmed cases of the virus as of Wednesday.

U.S. citizens and green-card holders are exempted from the temporary ban, as are their spouses and children. Citizens and green-card holders under the age of 21 are also eligible to bring parents into the U.S. Passengers on flights that take off Friday before midnight will still be eligible to enter the U.S., even if they land after the ban takes effect, according to the Wall Street Journal.

The U.S. Virgin Islands economy, heavily dependent on tourism, will be affected by the latest announcement. The territory's tourism product had started to rebound from the devastating hurricanes of 2017, which forced the closure of major hotels, limiting the USVI's lodging capacity. Now, with Americans — the territory's largest market for visitors — curtailing their travel plans by both sea and air, the impact is poised to ripple through the local economy.

Governor Albert Bryan has been on the U.S. mainland since Monday in discussions with cruise ship officials, where Mr. Bryan said he had gotten fresh reassurances from cruise line officials that stringent precautionary measures were being taken in light of the coronavirus pandemic.