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Jamaica Confirms 19 Cases of Coronavirus, Closes All Air and Seaports

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United and JetBlue at the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, Jamaica. By. THE SANGSTER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

JAMAICA — Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness announced on Friday that three additional cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) have been confirmed, bringing the total to 19 in the island.

The new cases pertain to a 38-year-old United States male citizen with a history of travel from Boston, who arrived in the island on March 14; a 30-year-old female with a history of travel from New York arriving in Jamaica on March 17; and a 60-year-old female, a retiree of Portland. The latter case is under investigation.

“We are at the point in the epidemic where we are classified as having local transmission, that means that we have imported cases and persons infected locally have been traced to those imported cases,” the prime minister explained during a press conference at Jamaica House.

The government has announced that effective 11:59 pm on Saturday and for a period of 14 days in the first instance, that island’s air and sea ports will be closed to incoming passenger traffic.

Mr. Holness in making the announcement on Friday evening said outgoing passengers and cargo will be allowed.

“Shelter in place” said Mr. Holness concerning Jamaicans who are out of the country.

“Our prayers are with you, we understand that this decision to close our borders will cause some displacement, but this is an emergency. It’s not a joke.”

The decision to close the ports follows news that the island now has 19 confirmed cases of COVID-19 .

The new cases include a 38-year-old male US citizen with a history of travel from Boston who arrived March 14, a 30-year-old female with a history of travel from New York arriving in Jamaica on March 17 and a 60-year-old female, a retiree of Portland.

Concerning activities being undertaken by the Ministry of Health, the Prime Minister said that final year medical science students will now support clinical and surveillance activities of the Ministry and a quarantine centre will be established at University Hospital.

Two communities are currently under quarantine: – they are 7 & 8 Miles in Bull Bay in the eastern parish of St Andrew and Corn Piece Settlement in the central parish of Clarendon.