

logo not found or type unknown

Antigua Government Warns of Harsher Measures Following Arrest of Pastor Who Flouted Limit on Gatherings

Coronavirus / **Published On March 30, 2020 07:38 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 30, 2020**

Image not found or type unknown



Antigua Royal Police Force By. ANTIGUA ROYAL POLICE FORCE FACEBOOK PAGE

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, Mar 30, CMC – Antigua Prime Minister Gaston Browne has hinted at the possibility of more stringent measures to deal with the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) after a pastor and a member of his church were arrested by the police on Sunday.

“We are very disappointed with the response thus far by certain irresponsible residents, who are violating our social distancing policy, to include limiting gatherings to 25. Also, we note the suicidal responses of some individuals of faith and their blatant disrespect for the laws of our country,” Browne posted on his Facebook page.

“We are now contemplating reducing social gatherings to 10 and to take more draconian actions, which will further curtail personal freedoms. This is a clarion call for personal responsibility by all to contain COVID-19,’ Browne added.

He wrote that “our collective efforts are required, to contain COVID-19 and protect the health of our nation, irrespective of our faith, ethnicity, nationality, or social standing,” adding “please respect the health protocols and the laws of our country”.

A police spokesman said that the pastor and the church goer are expected to be charged with violating the regulations under the limited state of emergency.

National Security Minister Steadroy Benjamin expressed disappointment at the situation where police said they clashed with members of the church after indicating that more than 25 worshippers had gathered on Sunday.

“The police were confronted by a group of persons who showed no regard whatsoever to the police in these circumstances. That is not acceptable. We are now in a curfew ...and we want to make it clear to all and sundry regardless of where the gatherings are, this government will not permit any gatherings anywhere of any group which exceeds 25 persons”.

Benjamin said the police will continue to carry out their duties “and if those persons resist, they will be charged under the law and made to pay a fine of up to EC\$10,000 (One EC dollar=US\$0.37 cents) and or imprisonment up to six months”.