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German Cruise Ship Denied Entry Into St. Lucia Following Confirmation of Respiratory Tract Infections

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AIDAPERLA

ST. LUCIA (CMC) — St. Lucia on Saturday denied a cruise ship with more than 3,000 passengers on board entry in the Castries Harbor after health authorities confirmed that some passengers were experiencing respiratory tract infections.

But the Department of Health & Wellness denied reports that there may have been cases of the deadly coronavirus (2019-nCoV) that has killed more than 200 people in China and which the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared a global health emergency.

The vessel, the AIDAPERLA with close to 3,300 passengers was scheduled to dock at the Castries Harbor at about 8:00 am (local time). Built in 2017, it currently sails under the flag of Italy and its

last port of call was in Kingstown, St Vincent.

Health officials told reporters that several individuals on board the Aida Perla were presenting cases of “upper respiratory tract infections” and the vessel was turned away, “in accordance with the Health Declaration”.

In a statement, The Department of Health & Wellness said that based on information received from the cruise ship, the decision was taken not to grant clearance to the vessel as there was an unusually high number of sick passengers on board.

“This decision was taken out of an abundance of caution for human health and safety,” the statement said, adding “it is noteworthy that the health authorities at no time suspected that there were any cases of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) on board the vessel and therefore would like to categorically dismiss any false claims that maybe in circulated”.

St Lucia, like other Caribbean countries, has activated its coronavirus response plan with the Department of Health & Wellness stating that it continues to monitor the international situation.