



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH,  
WELLNESS AND THE  
ENVIRONMENT**

**Ministerial Building, Kingstown,  
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sunday, February 16, 2020

Contact: Permanent Secretary  
*Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

**STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: NO COVID-19 IN SVG**

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment (MOHWE) wishes to inform the nation that contrary to claims being made on social media there are currently **no cases of COVID-19 or Coronavirus 19 disease in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.**

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment informed the nation on Friday February 7, 2020 that one Vincentian returning from China, the epicentre of the COVID-19 epidemic, had been placed in quarantine for 14 days as is recommended by the World Health Organisation, the Pan American Health Organisation, the United States Centre for Disease Control and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). That individual remains in quarantine and has shown no symptoms of being ill. The person is monitored on a twice daily basis by health care workers. This citizen was the first person to be put under quarantine.

Since then, 16 other persons have been quarantined. On Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 3 Chinese nationals (2 residents and 1 citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines) returned from China having left there on February 10, 2020. They travelled through Germany and Barbados. Those 3 individuals have been quarantined along with all of the other 13 members of their households. None of the 3 travelers have shown any signs or symptoms of infection with COVID-19. These individuals also receive twice daily checks by health care workers.

On Friday, February 14, 2020, during the daily health check, one member of one household was found to have a low grade fever. This person is not one of the travelers from China and none of the travelers had any symptoms. However, out of an abundance of caution, swabs were taken for laboratory analysis from the person with the fever and the contact who had traveled. The samples were transported by the Regional Security System (RSS) aircraft to Trinidad on Saturday morning to be analysed for COVID-19 at the CARPHA Public Health Laboratory in Port of Spain. The laboratory reported that both **samples were negative for COVID-19.** The MOHWE Medical Laboratory however found that the person with the fever had Influenza B, a form of the flu.

The MOHWE will continue to monitor all 17 persons under quarantine for the recommended 14 days and will take all measures necessary to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the entire population of SVG. The general public is further advised that at no time was there any connection between the AIDA Perla cruiseship which docked at Port Kingstown earlier this month and the

persons under quarantine. Additionally, the passengers and crew of the AIDA Perla did not pose any risk to the population of SVG.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment will continue in a mode of preparedness to allow for the prompt response to any threat to the health of our nation. This includes ensuring that we are capable of caring for persons with a range of illnesses including infectious diseases. The Milton Cato Memorial Hospital has a limited capacity to house patients with infectious diseases requiring isolation. The MOHWE is therefore preparing multiple alternative sites in the event that we need to care for a large number of persons with an infectious disease requiring isolation. The Ministry wishes to reassure the nation that every precaution will be taken to prevent the spread of any infectious disease within and outside of its healthcare facilities.

The Ministry takes this opportunity to repeat its previous caution against travel to and from China at this time. The Ministry reminds the public that anyone who arrives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines having been in China within 14 days prior to arrival will be quarantined for 2 weeks. The cooperation of the general public is solicited as we work together to keep everyone healthy. We urge everyone to refrain from spreading rumors which can cause unhealthy panic.

Finally, the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment will like to thank the many dedicated health care workers, members of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, the Immigration Department and our other partners for their tireless work to keep SVG healthy – this is truly a shared responsibility.

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