

INTELLIGENCE ALERT -- GLOBAL MONITORING

GLOBAL COVID-19 UPDATE

LOCATION: Worldwide

POTENTIAL IMPACT AREA: Worldwide

DATE/TIME: 25 March 2020 / 11650 local time (2150 UTC)

Incident:

On 25 March 2020, governments worldwide continue to impose restrictions as part of an overall effort to prevent the rapid spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In the U.S. the states of Minnesota and Idaho issued stay at home orders. Thailand's prime minister announced an entry ban on all foreign nationals. The governments of the Cayman Islands and St. Kitts and Nevis imposed restrictions on daily activities. The latest notable developments regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are outlined below:

AMERICAS

Antigua and Barbuda – U.K. FCO issues updated travel advice for Antigua and Barbuda

On 25 March the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) issued updated travel advice for Antigua and Barbuda, which reads in part as follows:

“On 24 March the Barbuda Council announced that from 27 March all ports of entry will be closed for 14 days. On 24 March the government of Antigua and Barbuda announced with immediate effect the consolidation of its borders: all private and commercial flights must arrive at VC Bird International (rather than runway 10). All sea vessels must arrive at Nevis Street Pier in St John's.”

Bermuda – Government closes nonessential businesses

On 23 March several mandated "social distancing" measures went into effect as part of an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Bermuda. In addition to advising residents to maintain a one-meter (approximately 3 feet) distance from one another, officials also announced that only essential businesses such as supermarkets and food suppliers, gas stations, banks and pharmacies are allowed to remain open. All schools and daycare centers are now closed, as well as gyms, churches, cinemas, bars and clubs. In addition, the dine-in option is no longer available at restaurants. Bermuda currently has six confirmed cases of COVID-19, five of which were due to travel.

Cayman Islands – Government announces 24-hour curfew

On 25 March the government of the Cayman Islands announced a 24-hour curfew from 1900 local time on 25 March (0000 UTC on 26 March) until 0500 local time (1000 UTC) on 28 March. Emergency services and other essential services will be allowed to operate. No businesses, including supermarkets and pharmacies, will be allowed to operate during this period. Authorities stated that a more flexible order will be implemented by 28 March.

Guadeloupe – Government imposes curfew in Sainte-Anne, Pointe-à-Pitre and Les Abymes

In Guadeloupe, a 2000–0500 local time (0000–0900 UTC) curfew went into effect on 24 March, and will remain in effect until 31 March. The curfew applies to the municipalities of Sainte-Anne, Pointe-à-Pitre and Les Abymes. Essential businesses and services are exempt from the curfew. Individuals are allowed to leave their homes and accommodations for essential activities, such as shopping at supermarkets and pharmacies, and for family emergencies and to seek medical attention.

Guatemala – State of emergency extended

Lawmakers voted to extend the country's state of emergency by 30 days on 24 March. These measures include a continuation of the closure of air, land and sea borders to all foreign travelers, a national curfew and mandated prices on basic food and medical necessities. Officials also called for additional measures to help protect health workers who are dealing with a shortage of medical masks.

Honduras – Authorities close markets in multiple cities

As of 24 March, all central markets in the cities of La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa are closed as part of an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Officials implemented the measure after residents flouted curfew restrictions and continued to congregate in market areas. The National Police and the armed forces are enforcing the protocol. Grocery stores remain open in order to allow residential access to food and basic necessities. The government also has plans to distribute food to 3.2 million Hondurans beginning 25 March. In the city of San Pedro Sula, authorities arrested 33 residents for breaking curfew. The police detained those who broke curfew and seized their motorcycles. The vehicles will be returned to their respective owners after the country's state of emergency ends. A total of 219 people were detained in Honduras for violating curfew. An increased police presence has also been reported in the cities of San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa to prevent crowds.

Panama – Quarantine measures introduced

President Laurentino Cortizo announced new quarantine measures on 24 March, including a strict shelter-in-place rule that will take effect on 25 March and continue until further notice. Residents may only leave their homes at a specific time – designated by the last number on their passport or identification card – to purchase food and medicine. Residents may leave a half hour before their time and return a half hour after. Regardless of the number on their identification card or passport, adults over 60 years of age may go shopping between 1100 local time and 1300 local time. Individuals working in essential services or business are exempt from restrictions.

Peru – U.S. Embassy in Lima issues Health Alert regarding repatriation flights

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Lima issued a Health Alert, which reads in part as follows:

“Location: Peru

“Event: Senior U.S. officials maintained constant communication with the Government of Peru throughout March 24 to secure permissions for flights to land on March 25 to repatriate U.S. citizens. At 11:15PM on March 24, the U.S. Embassy received final permission for the landing of a Lima-Miami flight and a Cusco-Lima-Miami. Manifested passengers received instructions via email less than ten minutes after the flights were approved. We continue to engage at the highest level to ensure that repatriation flights continue so that we can get our U.S. citizens home to their families and friends.

“We understand the quarantine makes movements to the airport difficult. The U.S. Embassy continues to negotiate those details with the Peruvian government and local authorities so that U.S. Citizens have safe and unhindered passage to the airports.”

St. Kitts and Nevis – Government closes borders to all arriving passengers

On 24 March the government of St. Kitts and Nevis announced the closure of the country's air and seaports to all arriving passengers from 1159 local time on 25 March (0359 UTC on 26 March) to 7 April. The ban applies to nationals and residents of St. Kitts and Nevis as well as all foreign nationals. Flights for medical emergencies and international cargo flights and shipments are exempt. Authorities did not announce a ban on departure flights.

Canada – Returning residents required to enter mandatory 14-day quarantine

Beginning on 26 March all Canadian citizens and legal permanent residents to Canada will be required to enter a mandatory 14-day self-isolation at their home to help curb the spread of COVID-19. The health minister stated that residents arriving at one of the four airports -- currently allowed to serve incoming international flights -- and traveling elsewhere in Canada will be asked to self-isolate in those cities for 14 days and the government will provide the food and lodging. The four airports currently receiving international travelers are Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport (CYUL/YUL), Toronto Pearson International Airport (CYYZ/YYZ), Calgary International Airport (CYYC/YYC) and Vancouver International Airport (CYVR/YVR).

United States – Stay-at-home orders issued in Miami, Florida and several U.S. states

On 25 March the U.S. states of Minnesota and Idaho issued stay-at-home orders and urged residents to not leave their homes, except to procure essential items, such as food and medicine, in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. Individuals traveling for work in sectors deemed essential are exempt from the restrictions. In Minnesota, the order is effective from 2359 local time on 27 March to 1700 local time on 10 April, whereas in Idaho, the order went into effect immediately and will remain in place for the next 21 days. Nonessential businesses, such as bars, nightclubs and fitness centers, have also been ordered to shut down, and a ban on nonessential mass gatherings is imposed in both states.

On 24 March officials in the U.S. city of Miami, Florida, imposed a mandatory shelter-in-place order in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, beginning at 2359 local time until further notice. The mayor of Miami urged residents to stay in their homes to the greatest extent possible and closed all parks in the city on 19 March before issuing the aforementioned mandatory order. Similar mandatory orders are in place in a number of U.S. states, including Hawaii (from 24 March-30 April); New Mexico (from 24 March until further notice); Oregon (from 23 March until further notice); Vermont (from 25 March-15 April); West Virginia (from 24 March until further notice); Wisconsin (from 24 March-24 April). Residents in the aforementioned states traveling for essential purposes, such as obtaining basic goods -- including food and medicine -- and for work in sectors deemed essential, are exempt from the restrictions. Commercial establishments that are deemed essential -- such as grocery stores and gas stations -- will remain open; however, all nonessential businesses have been ordered to suspend in-person operations. Meanwhile, the states of Maryland, Nevada, Virginia and Kentucky have ordered nonessential businesses to close down, but did not issue stay-at-home orders.

EUROPE***Albania - U.S. Embassy in Tirana issues Health Alert***

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Tirana issued an alert regarding information on commercial flights departing Albania and border closures, which reads in part as follows:

“Location: Albania

“Event: The U.S. Embassy urges you to arrange for immediate return to the United States, unless you are prepared to remain in Albania for an indefinite period. All land borders are closed and there is currently only one daily flight departing Albania, operated by Air Albania. There is no available information about how long the flight will continue to operate. The Air Albania flight departs Tirana for Istanbul, where you can connect to flights destined for the United States.”

Armenia – Government announces 7-day nationwide lockdown

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced a nationwide lockdown from 24-31 March. The announcement closed all non-essential businesses and banned interprovincial travel by buses and mini-buses. Residents are expected to remain indoors during the lockdown unless they are shopping for essential goods, seeking medical attention or engaging in physical exercise. All persons who leave their home or accommodation are required to complete and carry a government form regarding the purpose of their movement activity and carry their passport.

Belgium - U.S. Embassy in Brussels issues Health Alert

On 24 March 2020, the U.S. Embassy in Brussels issued an alert regarding information on commercial flights departing Belgium to the U.S., which reads in part as follows:

“Location: Belgium

“U.S. citizens who are considering returning to the United States are urged to work with their airlines to make travel arrangements while flights are still available. If your travel has been disrupted, please contact your airline – the U.S. Embassy cannot make individual flight arrangements on your behalf.

“According to current information, United Airlines is operating the only direct flight to the United States from Belgium – a daily nonstop between Brussels and Newark. The last scheduled service will be on Saturday, March 28. After that, commercial flights on a variety of carriers are expected to continue out of London, United Kingdom, Frankfurt, Germany, and Amsterdam, Netherlands, although many travelers have reported unexpected flight cancellations and limited flight availability. Travelers should be prepared for travel restrictions to be put into effect with little or no advance notice.”

France - Paris Orly Airport (LFPO/ORY) to close on 31 March

On 25 March officials announced that Paris Orly Airport (LFPO/ORY) will close due to reduced demand for air travel and increased travel restrictions worldwide as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. The closure is expected to occur on 31 March. Remaining flights will be transferred to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (LFPG/CDG), which recently closed several terminals to cope with reduced demand.

France - Public transportation services to be reduced across Paris

Officials for Paris’ Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP) and national rail operator Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (SNCF) announced that public transportation services will be significantly reduced across Paris as of 25 March. Approximately 50 metro stations and the Réseau Express Régional (RER) and Paris Metro are expected to operate from 0600-2000 local time (0500-1900 UTC). Officials stated that the reduced frequency of train service is a result of reduced demand in response to the nationwide ban on non-essential travel. Officials implemented the ban as part of an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Romania – Government introduces additional movement restrictions to curb spread of coronavirus

On 24 March authorities announced additional measures to curb the spread of COVID-19s. Effectively immediately, residents are not allowed out of doors except for essential work, medical emergencies, exercise or buying groceries. Although those above the age of 65 are not allowed to their residences for any reason, local authorities are in place to assist where needed. The government will also monitor residents in self-quarantine to ensure compliance. These measures will be enforced by the police and military. At present, Romania has 762 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Russia - Train services reduced throughout country

On 25 March Russia's Federal Passenger Company announced a reduction of train services throughout the country. Officials stated that the reduction was due to decreased demand as a result of COVID-19. Affected routes include trains running between Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod; Moscow and St. Petersburg; Yekaterinburg and Kazan; Irkutsk and Zabaikalsk; and Belgorod and Moscow. The reduction in train services is expected to continue into late May.

Serbia - U.S. Embassy in Belgrade issued an alert regarding a scheduled charter flight

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade issued an alert regarding information on a charter flight departing Serbia, which reads in part as follows:

"Location: Serbia

"Event: The U.S. Embassy in Serbia has coordinated a charter flight, departing March 26 at 12:00 noon, from Nikola Tesla airport (BEG) in Belgrade. This flight will go directly from BEG to Los Angeles (LAX). We do not know when civilian flights and normal travel will resume in Serbia but urge travelers to continue to check the availability of commercial flight options."

Further information on the chartered flight is available [here](#).

Switzerland - Swiss officials extended entry restrictions to all Schengen area members

On 25 March Swiss officials extended entry restrictions to all Schengen area members due concerns over the spread of COVID-19. The travel ban previously applied to all non-Schengen area members and Austria, Italy, France, Germany and Spain. The new restrictions exempt citizens of Liechtenstein and Switzerland, permanent residents of Switzerland and workers. Travelers are still able to transit through airports within the country.

Ukraine - Officials declare nationwide emergency

On 25 March Ukrainian officials declared a nationwide emergency for the next 30 days to combat the spread of COVID-19. Previously, emergencies had only been declared regionally, including in the capital Kiev. The emergency declaration extends nationwide lockdown measures through at least 24 April.

Ukraine – U.S. Embassy issues message regarding U.S.-bound flight from Kyiv

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv issued a Health Alert, which reads in part as follows:

"Location: Kyiv, Ukraine

"Event: Ukrainian International Airlines still has seats available on its direct flight from KBP to New York City-JFK airport on Friday, March 27. If you need to leave Ukraine, you should strongly consider booking this flight. This is the second flight this week and may be your last opportunity for a while. Please monitor <https://www.flyuia.com/ua/en/information/fly-home> for ticket availability."

The full text of the Alert is available [here](#).

ASIA***Kazakhstan – U.S. Embassy in Nur-Sultan issues Health Alert regarding disinfection measures in Almaty***

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Almaty issued a Health Alert, which reads in part as follows:

"Location: Almaty, Kazakhstan

“On March 25, Almaty city authorities announced that disinfection around Almaty will begin today and asked all citizens to stay home for the disinfection period and for five hours afterward. A specific completion time for the disinfection was not provided. Markets, playgrounds, pedestrian areas, and areas around residential buildings will be treated with disinfectants. According to the Almaty city government, residents of affected areas will be informed by loudspeakers and written notices on doors. The city government also stated that the Esentai, Big Almaty, and Terrenkur river banks will also be disinfected. The authorities asked all residents to remove bicycles, baby strollers and other items from staircases or lobbies in residential areas.”

Malaysia – Prime minister extends movement control order

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin announced on 25 March that the current movement control order, which was initially imposed on 18 March, will be extended until 14 April. Previously, the order was set to expire on 31 March. The measure is similar to other lockdown orders throughout the world in that it restricts travel nationwide, only to allow residents to leave their homes to procure essential goods and services, such as groceries and medical services.

Philippines – New law grants Duterte special powers to manage COVID-19 outbreak

On 25 March President Rodrigo Duterte signed into law a bill that grants him additional powers in order to better manage the country’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new law also declared a national state of emergency. Among the powers granted to Duterte are the ability to provide payments to low-income families as well as the families of health care workers who become infected with COVID-19, and to take control of private medical facilities and public transportation. Duterte also sought the power to take control of other private companies and utilities, but those provisions were removed from the final draft of the legislation.

Philippines – U.S. Embassy in Manila issues Health Alert

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Manila issued a Health Alert that reads in part as follows:

“Location: The Philippines

“Event:

“Most international flights to be suspended: Several airlines have already suspended or indicated intent to suspend international flights until April 14, 2020, or until further notice. While the U.S. Embassy has been making every effort possible to assist U.S. citizens through coordination with local authorities including the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT), options to fly within and out of the Philippines are extremely limited. Please monitor the DOT for announcement of available sweeper flights.

“Consider your plan to shelter in place: While the U.S. Embassy attempts to address these continuing challenges in assisting U.S. citizens, please make necessary preparations if staying in the Philippines during the quarantine period. Please comply with local quarantine requirements and strictly follow local authorities.

“Hotel information: Passengers in the National Capital Region (NCR) can book a hotel online or visit the DOT airport office for assistance at 4/F Terminal 1, Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Pasay; Point of Contact is Ms. Jenny Factora through mobile number +63 927 993 5965. Please note the Embassy cannot cover costs related to your stay. This list is provided by the Philippine Department of Tourism; the fact that the Embassy is listing the establishments here should not be construed as an endorsement.”

The full text of the alert can be read [here](#).

Philippines – U.S. Embassy in Manila issues Health alert regarding flights from Cebu

On 25 March 2020, the U.S. Embassy in Manila issued a Health Alert that reads in part as follows:

"Location: Cebu, Philippines

"Event:

"Mactan Cebu Airport Terminal relayed the following:

- There is a potential sweeper flight from Philippine Airlines tomorrow, March 26, 2020, departing Cebu to Manila. Passengers must show proof of an outbound international flight out of Manila or a hotel reservation in Manila.
- Passengers are required to inquire in person and present their documents at the airport by 8:00 A.M.
- The potential flight tomorrow will be departing at 13:30H /1:30 P.M. However, please note that the flight is subject to the number of passengers who will purchase tickets at the PAL ticketing office located at the Mactan Cebu Airport.
- The average cost of the flight from Cebu to Manila is approximately Php 10,000 per passenger.
- Passengers may call the Mactan Cebu Airport Help Desk at 0917-573-7180 (mobile) or 0917-570-3060 (mobile) for more information.
- Per the Department of Tourism (DOT), stranded foreigners can approach the set-up table provided for them so they can register and be included in the DOT list. The tables are located at the Mactan Cebu Airport in both Terminals 1 and 2. Stranded individuals can look for the "DOT/GMCAC Pad for stranded foreigners". Airlines may require passengers to be on the DOT list prior to issuing a ticket. For further information, please contact 0917-304-2613.

The full text of the alert can be read [here](#).

Thailand – State of emergency declared, foreign nationals banned from entering Thailand

On 25 March Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha declared a state of emergency in Thailand and banned all foreign travelers from entering the country in an effort to combat the spread of COVID-19. Under the emergency decree -- which goes into effect at 0000 local time on 26 March (1700 UTC on 25 March) and continues through the end of April -- mass social gatherings will be prohibited, domestic travel will be restricted and all nonessential commercial establishments will shut down. While no curfew orders have been announced, Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-Ngam indicated that a 24-hour restriction, except to obtain basic necessities -- such as food and medicine -- could be imposed during the state of emergency. Thailand has recorded at least 934 confirmed COVID-19 cases with four fatalities; for comparison, there were approximately 40 such cases in the country in the beginning of March.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Egypt – U.S. Embassy in Cairo issues Health Alert regarding repatriation of citizens

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Cairo issued a Health Alert that reads in part as follows:

"Location: Egypt

"Event: The U.S. Embassy in Cairo is coordinating closely with the Egyptian Government on all options for U.S. citizens to depart the country, potentially to include a dedicated flight to the U.S. We are collecting information from U.S. citizens who have contacted us seeking assistance with returning to the U.S.

"If you have not already done so, please send an email to CairoRepat@state.gov with the full name, U.S. passport number, date of birth, email address and phone number for you and each member of your group. Please also indicate any medical conditions of anyone who is traveling.

"The U.S. Embassy in Cairo encourages U.S. citizens in Egypt to adhere to local curfew measures to prevent the spread of the virus and to continue to check with commercial airlines for upcoming flights departing the

country. The U.S. Embassy in Cairo is aware of some private travel agencies and hotels who may also be able to assist U.S. citizens with identifying any travel options that might still be available to depart Egypt."

Egypt – Officials announce nightly curfew

25 March 2020, Egyptian officials began enforcing a nightly curfew from 1900-0600 local time until at least 8 April. During the curfew hours, all public and private transportation will cease to operate. Additionally, anyone found violating the curfew may face a fine of up to 4,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately 250 U.S. dollars). While shopping malls in the country will remain open from 0600-1700 local time Sunday to Thursday, all entertainment facilities will be closed at all times.

Kuwait – U.S. Embassy in Kuwait issues message regarding evacuation flights

On 25 March the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait issued a message regarding evacuation flights from Kuwait, which reads in part as follows:

"The U.S. Embassy has been informed of a commercial Kuwait Airways flight for U.S. citizens departing Kuwait International Airport on Friday, March 27, 2020 at 10:00am to New York City (JFK International Airport). The U.S. Embassy in Kuwait is working with airlines to potentially arrange additional flights to the United States, but this is currently the only confirmed flight.

"If you want to depart on this flight and are willing to pay the cost of the airfare to Kuwait Airways, please email the information below to KuwaitEvac@state.gov by 2:00pm today (Wednesday, March 25). The flight will be filled in the order that the emails are received, and priority will be given to elderly and minor travelers. Please do not call the Embassy to confirm receipt of your email; we will contact you if your name was forwarded to Kuwait Airways. If your name is not forwarded to Kuwait Airways, we will maintain your contact information for future possible flights."

To read the full text of the message please click [here](#).

Morocco – Officials announce extension of state of Emergency

On 25 March Moroccan officials announced that the country's "Health State of Emergency" will remain in effect until 20 April. The state of emergency prohibits nonessential movement from 0600- 1800 local time (0500-1700 UTC). The exceptions include travel to and from work, essential shopping and medical purposes.

Saudi Arabia – King announces lockdown of Mecca, Medina and Riyadh

On 25 March Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz announced a lockdown of the cities of Mecca, Medina and Riyadh in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the country. The lockdown will begin at 1900 local time (1700 UTC) and will prohibit residents from entering or exiting the three cities. Separately, the king also issued a decree prohibiting residents of Saudi Arabia's 13 provinces from traveling between the provinces. The second decree will go into effect on 26 March at 1500 local time. Essential workers, including security forces, media and health care workers, are exempt.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Democratic Republic of the Congo – President Tshisekedi declares state of emergency, suspends domestic flights

On the evening of 24 March President Félix Tshisekedi declared a nationwide state of emergency for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and announced additional measures aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19. Tshisekedi ordered the suspension of all domestic flights within the DRC effective immediately and until further notice; previously, Tshisekedi announced the suspension of all international flight from 21 March through at least 3 April. Additionally, all ground movements into and out of the capital Kinshasa will be banned

until further notice; all cargo transport will be permitted entry, but must first pass through police checkpoints to enter the city.

Eswatini – Prime Minister Ambrose Dlamini announces partial lockdown from 27 March

On 24 March Prime Minister Ambrose Dlamini declared a partial nationwide lockdown, which will go into effect at 0000 local time on 27 March (2200 UTC on 26 March) and will remain in place for at least 20 days. The order bans all travel within the country and allows residents only to leave their homes for essential purposes, such as buying food or seeking medical care. The government has ordered other businesses deemed nonessential to close during the lockdown period. The country's borders remain open at this time; however, any passengers arriving from a COVID-19-affected country, including South Africa -- where health officials have confirmed more than 700 cases of the disease -- will be required to observe a 14-day self-quarantine. The military has deployed nationwide to enforce the lockdown.

South Sudan – President Salva Kiir announces nightly nationwide curfew

On the evening of 24 March South Sudanese President Salva Kiir announced a nightly nationwide curfew from 2000-0600 local time (1700-0300 UTC). The curfew went into effect that same evening and will remain in place for at least 30 days. South Sudan closed its borders -- including land crossings and the suspension of all international flights -- on 24 March. Health officials in the landlocked country have not confirmed any COVID-19 cases as yet; however, all six countries that border South Sudan have recorded confirmed cases.

Kenya - President announces nationwide nightly curfew

On 25 March President Uhuru Kenyatta announced a nationwide nightly curfew from 1900-0500 local time (1600-0200 UTC) as part of an overall effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The curfew will go into effect on 27 March and last until further notice. Thus far, Kenya has 28 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Rwanda – Police officers enforce nationwide lockdown

According to reports on 25 March police officers across Rwanda have used force to ensure residents are complying with the nationwide lockdown that began on 22 March. On 23 March, police officers fired live rounds at violators on the outskirts of Kigali; anecdotal reports indicate that at least two people were killed in the incident.

Uganda – President Museveni suspends public transportation for 14 days

On 25 March Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni suspended all forms of public transportation effective immediately. The measure -- which is in effect until at least 8 April -- is part of an overall effort to curb the spread of COVID-19. Private vehicles may continue to operate, but cannot carry more than three people; all taxis, buses, coasters, passenger trains, tricycles and boda bodas are included in the suspension. Commercial trucks lorries, and boda bodas used for food delivery may continue to operate normally. To date, Uganda has at least 14 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country.

Zambia – President Edgar Lungu announces new restrictions, closes most Zambian airports

On 25 March President Edgar Lungu ordered the closure of all Zambian airports -- except the capital Lusaka's Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (FLKK/LUN), where enhanced screening measures against COVID-19 are in place. The suspension will go into effect at 0000 local time on 26 March (2200 UTC on 24 March) and remain in place for at least two weeks. Lungu has also ordered the closure of all bars, gyms and other nonessential businesses and banned public gatherings of more than 50 people. Restaurants nationwide are permitted to continue delivery and carryout options.

Zimbabwe – Health care workers, customs officials launch strike action amid COVID-19 pandemic

According to reports on 25 March health care workers in public hospitals and customs officials at Zimbabwean airport have launched strike actions to protest the government's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In Harare, nurses and junior doctors at several public hospitals -- including Harare Central Hospital -- are engaging in a work stoppage to protest shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE). The extent to which the strike will effect health care provision in Harare and elsewhere across Zimbabwe is unclear at this time; however, senior doctors have not joined the work stoppage yet.

Meanwhile, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority Trade Union -- which represents customs officials in airports across the country -- announced that dozens of its members have launched a similar work stoppage, reportedly due to a lack of adequate screening and isolation measures against COVID-19 in place at airports. Thus far, health officials have confirmed three COVID-19 cases in Zimbabwe, including one fatal case.

If you require assistance or have any concerns regarding travel to this destination, or the content of this briefing, please contact UnitedHealthcare Global - day or night - at (1-713) 430-7300.