

# *Colombia to suspend entry for all travelers from abroad*

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Bogota, March 20 (RHC)-- Colombia will block entry to everyone traveling from abroad from midnight on Monday to control the spread of coronavirus, President Ivan Duque has announced, under pressure domestically to react efficiently to the global pandemic.

The Andean country earlier this week closed its land and water borders and limited entry through airports to citizens and resident foreigners. "Until the weekend, we will permit the entrance of Colombians coming from abroad, and for 30 days, we will suspend the entrance of international travelers," Duque said in a televised address. His office later clarified in a tweet that the measure would be effective from midnight on Monday.

Colombians living or traveling abroad have had a "wide window" to return home, Duque said, adding he was aware the measure would likely be unpopular. In Bogota's airport in Salitre, hundreds are accumulating at the bus hub to enjoy the bank holiday with no caution over coronavirus concerns.

So far, 108 people in Colombia have been confirmed infected by the coronavirus, most of them after traveling in Europe or the United States. No deaths related to the illness have been verified. Duque's government has been heavily criticized for not taking measures early enough.

On Tuesday, the country ordered people aged 70 and over to stay home from Friday until the end of May, except for trips to purchase food, get medical care or complete financial transactions. The government published a decree on Wednesday, ordering local and municipal governments to coordinate mass isolation efforts with it after several regional leaders put in place curfews and other measures.

The mayor of Bogota has urged citizens in the city of more than 7 million to participate in a weekend practice for potential future mass isolation. The Office in Colombia of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed this Thursday that the care of the pandemic should prioritize the human rights approach.

The Office "hopes that all the ongoing measures and actions and those that are going to be implemented in the country will allow us to overcome the current emergency, saving lives, and abiding by international human rights' standards."

It recalled that measures related to the limitation of rights and the regulation of public order should aim at respecting human rights and dignity.

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