

Residents return to U.S. after weeks stranded in Cuba by coronavirus



Havana, April 25 (RHC)-- Residents and citizens of the United States were repatriated from Cuba after being stranded for several weeks due to the closure of the island's borders since early April because of the coronavirus outbreak, according to a report by Reuters news service.

The charter flights, operated by Delta Airlines, were coordinated by the U.S. embassy in Havana, which did not specify the number of travelers who took the planes to Miami, Florida.

According to Cuba's Health Ministry, some 5,000 foreigners not residing on the island and 7,000 Cuban immigrants remained in the country trapped by the measures taken to stop the spread of the new coronavirus.

"The relief of being able to leave is great. The feeling that I didn't have any health problems, not even at work (Baxley, Georgia), decreased the stress and I used that energy to help my family," said Rodolfo Díaz, a Cuban-American engineer who lives in Georgia. Díaz, 45-years-old, had traveled to Havana on March 14th because of the illness of his mother, who died on April 1st.

Among the travelers were Cubans residing in the United States who originally feared they would not be able to return because of the Cuban government's ban on citizens with legal rights even in Cuba from leaving the island, but they eventually obtained permits from the immigration office.

However, not all Cubans living in the United States have met the same fate. For example, Ariel Ramirez, who visited his family in the eastern province of Holguin, said he had not been included in either of Delta's flights. Passengers will have to pay for their tickets to the United States.

"Economically, I am in a bad way because the money I brought with me ran out and I was not prepared to be stranded in Cuba," Ramírez, who lives in Las Vegas and had arrived in Havana on March 16th.

Since late March, the Cuban government has implemented severe measures to contain the virus, such as prohibiting the entry and exit of travelers and boats, closing schools and paralyzing public transportation.

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