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Madrid, September 26 (RHC)-- Flights have been grounded on the island of La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands due to a fresh volcanic eruption, in the first cancellation of air traffic since the Cumbre Vieja volcano came to life last week.

New evacuations were also ordered over the weekend as large explosions and new openings were reported at the volcano, which spewed a large cloud of thick, black ash into the air.

There were seven flights scheduled for the weekend, operated by Binter, Canaryfly and the national carrier, Iberia, but all were scrapped. “It is not yet possible to say when we can resume flights,” Spanish carrier Binter said on Twitter.

Authorities also ordered new evacuations, adding to the 6,100 people already forced to leave the area this week following Sunday’s eruption. The compulsory evacuation order was issued in parts of La Palma island “given the increased risk for the population due to the current eruptive episode”, the regional government said.

Video footage from the civil guard showed a garden in the area completely covered in thick ash. The speed of the lava flowing from the mouth of the volcano has steadily slowed its pace in recent days, and experts are hoping it will not reach the coast.

If the molten lava reaches the sea, experts fear it will generate clouds of toxic gas into the air, which will also affect the marine environment. Authorities set up a no-go zone this week to head off curious onlookers.

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