
Cuba announces measures to tackle COVID-19, restricts borders

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Cuba announced on Friday a set of measures aimed at controlling the spread of COVID-19 in the national territory, which includes border restrictions, and stopping the entry of tourists.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez introduced the processes that will be implemented in the country in the Round Table TV and radio program that was aired from the seat of government, the Palace of Revolution.

He explained that the island's authorities are working tirelessly to avert the spread of the pandemic, are closely observing the experience of the most affected countries, and are following the protocols issued by the World Health Organization.

In Cuba, 21 cases of the coronavirus have been diagnosed so far.

The President noted that the National COVID-19 Plan sets three stages, each with particular actions.

He said that Cuba is currently on Phase-1, which is the pre-epidemic phase. Phase-2 would be declared in the presence of limited autochthonous transmission and Phase-3, would entail the peak of the circulation of the virus on the island.

Serenity, realism, objectivity, were the words the President mentioned, while he urged not to give space to panic or excesses.

"Preserving the healthcare of our people requires political will." Still, he insisted that the country must keep its economic activity.

In elaborating on the measures, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero, clarified that Cuba was not closing its borders, but

regulating the entry by air or sea, allowing only Cuban nationals and foreigners who work or reside permanently.

With regards to the crew of ships, the Prime Minister said they would not be allowed to touch land, and if they need to do so, they would be submitted to strict surveillance procedures.

"Trade will not be stopped, merchant ships will continue arriving in the country, with the crew limitations mentioned, and cargo plane will also be arriving, and their crews will be isolated and under strict surveillance and medical care if needed," Marrero said.

The Prime Minister added that there are some 60 thousand foreigners in the country, who are leaving the country at a tune of some 10 thousand a day, and the withdrawal of all the tourists from the island is underway.

Likewise, he said that 30 days after next Tuesday, March 24, the country will be entirely closed to any person who does not reside on the island.

Marrero said that Cuba had informed the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that airports and ports of the island remain open with the limitations mentioned.
