

**Local PR contact:**

**Aprille Thomas**

 **Communications & Public Relations Manager**

**aprillet@visitbarbados.org**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BARBADOS REACHES COVID-19 MILESTONE, FLIGHTS RESUME JULY 12**

On Friday, Prime Minister the Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, announced that Barbados has reached a milestone in its fight against COVID-19. There are no more active cases of COVID-19 in Barbados, and effective July 1, 2020, all curfews will be lifted.

The Prime Minister made the announcement during a press conference at Ilaro Court, flanked by Minister of Health and Wellness, the Hon. Jeffrey Bostic; Minister of Tourism and International Transport, the Hon. Kerrie Symmonds; and Attorney General, the Hon. Dale Marshall. Mottley thanked Bostic and his team of health care workers for their hard work and dedication in leading Barbados to this breakthrough.

“This is testimony to the will, discipline and commitment of Barbadian people… the health authorities, the frontline workers, the essential services, the social partnership, the media, the police, those on the borders, all have been integral to the success we have had thus far in tackling this pandemic. And more so, each and every Bajan in every house and in every community,” Mottley said.

Other relaxed measures announced include physical distancing of three feet, social events with up to 500 patrons, and sporting events with spectators.

**Commercial airspace reopens**

On the heels of 35 days with no new cases, Mottley shared the good news that commercial flights will resume at the Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) commencing July 12, 2020 with a twice weekly Air Canada service from Pearson International on Thursdays and Saturdays. On July 18, 2020 British Airways will resume a weekly flight out of London Gatwick; and Jet Blue is tentatively set to return to the island on July 25, 2020 with four weekly flights out of JFK in New York.

“We will continue to take a risk based approach to the protection of our country, our people and our visitors,” she stressed.

Intraregional flights on Caribbean Airlines are expected to resume in mid-July 2020, while Virgin Atlantic’s weekly service from London Heathrow will return on August 1, 2020 and increase in October for the upcoming Winter season. Four days later on August 5, 2020, American Airlines will resume flights out of Miami, Florida.

**Health and safety top priority**

Minister Symmonds meanwhile outlined the new protocols to ensure the health and safety of both visitors and residents once flights resume.

Within 72 hours prior to departure for Barbados, all travellers from high risk countries are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test from an accredited laboratory (ISO, CAP, UKAS or equivalent). High risk countries are defined as those with more than 10,000 new cases in the prior seven days and community transmission.

Travellers from low risk countries will have up to one week prior to departure for Barbados to take their tests. Low risk countries are defined as those with less than 100 new cases in the prior seven days and not in the Community Transmission Category.

There will also be a new online Embarkation/ Disembarkation card (ED card), with personal health questions relating to COVID-19 symptoms, which travellers will be required to complete. Once all required steps are completed and supporting documents uploaded, travellers will receive a bar code via email.

On arrival in Barbados, travellers will be required to present evidence of a negative result of a PCR COVID-19 test, and bar code to clear immigration.

Travellers without a documented negative PCR test result from an accredited or recognized laboratory will be required to take a test upon arrival, and will be quarantined at their expense, pending the results. The anticipated wait period for the test results is 48 hours. If travellers fail the test, they will be placed in isolation where they will receive care from the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

At the airport, other general public health protocols remain in place including wearing face masks en route to Barbados, physical distancing at three feet, and temperatures checks.

**The future of tourism**

As the country gradually reopens, Symmonds shared elements of the Tourism Reboot plan, including satellite entertainment activities in the absence of a formal Crop Over Festival, and the refurbishment of the popular St. Lawrence Gap.

Prime Minister Mottley added that the country will also be encouraging travellers to choose Barbados for extended stays against the new backdrop of remote working. “We want to create an environment that will allow people to come to Barbados to work, to rest and to play from here for an extended period of time during COVID-19. Why? Because we know that this is one of the best places on earth to be and to remain because of the care we will take to protect the people of this nation and those who are here on island with us.”

*More updates on Barbados’ response to COVID-19 can be found at* [*https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/covid-19/*](https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/covid-19/)*.*

- ENDS -

**About Barbados**

The island of Barbados offers the most authentic Caribbean experience with its exceptionally rich culture and history rooted in remarkable landscapes. Rated as one of the world's sexiest beaches in 2008 by Concierge.com; Barbados' Crane Beach in St. Philip stands as a premier destination for travellers. Barbados is also the first Zagat-rated Caribbean island and is known as the culinary capital of the Caribbean. Barbados has hosted several world class events including: The annual Barbados Food & Rum Festival; the 2006 PGA World Golf Championships-Barbados World Cup, the ICC Cricket World Cup Finals in 2007, the Sentebale Charity Polo match with Prince Harry of Wales in 2010, and the ICC Twenty20 Cricket Finals for 2010, and the Rihanna LOUD concert in 2012. Accommodations range from picturesque plantation houses and villas, to quaint bed and breakfasts and award-winning, five-star resorts. Grantley Adams International Airport offers even more non-stop and direct service from a growing number of U.S. cities, making Barbados the true gateway to the Eastern Caribbean. Barbados was voted eighth in the World by Trip Advisor's "2008 Travelers' Choice Destination Awards" in its Top 100 Destinations category. For more information on travel to Barbados, visit www.visitbarbados.org, follow on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/VisitBarbados, via Twitter @Barbados.