

# 19,000 British travellers return from cruise ships after major international effort

Working alongside industry, the Government has helped passengers return to the UK from 59 cruise ships from across the world.

More than 19,000 British holidaymakers caught up in the coronavirus crisis on cruise ships across the world have now returned to the UK.

The final group of British passengers are expected to disembark the Costa Deliziosa in Genoa today, taking the total number of British Nationals to return from 59 cruise liners to 19,180.

Cruise ships and their passengers were particularly impacted by the global outbreak of coronavirus due to the nature and design of a ship's environment, the higher volume and density of people on board, and the social mixing.

The first repatriation of British cruise ship passengers took place on February 21, with the evacuation of the 78 British nationals from the Diamond Princess in Japan.

Work intensified after the FCO advised against vulnerable people travelling on cruise ships on March 12. And major efforts have included the repatriation of more than 669 British nationals from the MS Braemar in Cuba, 135 British travellers from the Grand Princess in California, more than 350 from the Coral Princess in Florida, and a further 211 British holidaymakers from the Zaandam and Rotterdam cruise ships, also in Florida, earlier this month.

Efforts to repatriate holidaymakers have seen British embassies work with international militaries, including the Mexican Navy and National Guard who helped evacuate passengers from the Marella Explorer II, work closely on complex rescue missions with countries such as Cuba after the MS Braemar was turned away from numerous ports because infected passengers were on board, and lobby world leaders to ensure ships could dock, passengers could travel back to the UK and those requiring medical help received it.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Ensuring the safety of British nationals overseas is our number one priority, and I am pleased more than 19,000 British cruise ship passengers have now been reunited with their families.

This repatriation effort would not have been possible without the co-operation of partners across the world, including Japan, Cuba, Italy, Mexico and US, and I am extremely grateful for their assistance.

This UK Government effort has involved hundreds of Foreign Office staff working across five continents and 13 time zones, monitoring 59 cruise ships over 68 days, and liaising closely with the governments of more than 20 countries. Working with the Department for Transport, and the cruise ship industry, UK Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates General have facilitated the repatriations, while a 24-hour crisis team, including military experts and transport specialists, has been operating in London.

The Foreign Secretary and other Foreign Office Ministers lobbied counterparts across the world to secure the safe return of thousands of British nationals from the Americas, Asia and Europe.

[UK brings home 19,000 British travellers from cruise ships](#)