

Chartered flights arranged by HKSAR Government to take Hong Kong residents stranded in Peru to leave

A Government spokesman said today (April 3) that a chartered flight taking Hong Kong residents out of Peru is scheduled to depart from Lima to London at around 4pm on April 3 local time (5am on April 4, Hong Kong time). Upon arrival in London, the Hong Kong residents concerned will take an ordinary connecting flight with secured flight bookings back to Hong Kong. The cost will be borne by the users.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government earlier appealed to the Hong Kong residents in Peru who wish to take the chartered flight out of Peru to contact the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department (ImmD) by 1pm on April 1, Hong Kong time. Up till this point, the ImmD has received a total of 98 assistance requests from Hong Kong residents stranded in Peru, among whom 13 have left there already through other arrangements. At present, 65 people indicated that they would take the chartered flight arranged by the HKSAR Government to depart from Lima to Hong Kong via London while the rest who are still in Peru will not take the chartered flight on personal preference or because they are subject to quarantine. Regarding the Hong Kong residents in different locations in Peru, depending on the distance between their current location and Lima, would have to take a domestic flight or other long-haul land transports to go to Lima.

As Peru is in a state of national emergency, there are strict restrictions on all land and air traffic and all travel must be approved by the Peruvian authorities. These matters involve consultations with other government at the diplomatic level. With the full assistance of the Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR (OCMFA) and the Chinese Embassy in the Republic of Peru (Chinese Embassy in Peru), despite the difficulties met, the HKSAR Government has arranged an international chartered flight for departing Peru and a domestic chartered flight to take 29 Hong Kong residents in Cusco to Lima, and assisted those in other locations to Lima by land transport through local travel agencies' arrangement. The Chinese Embassy in Peru has been co-ordinating with the Peruvian authorities in issuing travel certificates and permits to Hong Kong residents concerned to ensure that they can reach Lima Airport smoothly.

The Hong Kong residents taking the chartered flight will depart from Lima to London in the afternoon of April 3, Peru time, followed by an ordinary connecting flight to Hong Kong which is estimated to arrive in the afternoon of April 5, Hong Kong time. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) advises these passengers to always pay attention to personal hygiene, especially hand hygiene and wearing masks. In this regard, the HKSAR

Government has made available masks (a pack of five) for each Hong Kong resident, which will be distributed by the chartered airline for their use during the flight passages. The Hong Kong residents returning from Peru, upon their arrival at Hong Kong International Airport, will proceed to the CHP's testing centre at the AsiaWorld-Expo for taking a mandatory COVID-19 testing. If the test result is negative, they can go home or to a designated place to continue completion of the 14-day compulsory quarantine.

As the Peruvian Government is currently imposing very strict immigration control and quarantine arrangements, any foreigners entering Peru must undergo a 14-day compulsory quarantine there, and other government officials travelling to Peru are no exception. As such, the ImmD is unable to dispatch officers to Peru to participate in this operation for assisting Hong Kong residents by a chartered flight. The ImmD officers will maintain close contact with the Chinese Embassy in Peru and rely on the embassy staff to provide on-site assistance to the affected Hong Kong residents. The ImmD officers will also maintain direct contact with the affected Hong Kong residents to ensure the smooth completion of the operation. To this end, the HKSAR Government is indebted to the support and assistance of the Chinese Embassy in Peru, as well as the support of the OCMFA.

The chartered flights are mainly arranged for Hong Kong residents. All Hong Kong residents who have expressed their wish to the ImmD for taking the chartered flights have been allocated a seat on the flight. For the sake of efficient resources utilisation and of mutual co-operation and benefit, the HKSAR Government has accepted the requests for assistance from other governments for allowing their residents to take the remaining seats of the chartered flights. According to the current estimation, four Malaysian residents will take the chartered flight from Cusco to Lima while six Malaysian residents and five British residents will take the chartered flight from Lima to London. They will arrange the following itinerary by themselves after arriving London. The cost for taking the chartered flights by them is also on user-pays basis.

The cost for taking the chartered flight from Lima to London followed by an ordinary connecting flight to Hong Kong is around HK\$30,000; and that from Cusco to Lima is around HK\$5,600. Residents of other countries will pay the same amount for taking the chartered flights.

The spokesman said that currently at least four Hong Kong residents are required to stay in Peru for quarantine and undergo COVID-19 testing. The HKSAR Government will continue to follow up with the OCMFA and the Chinese Embassy in Peru to provide practicable and appropriate assistance to the affected Hong Kong residents.