



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monitoring and Prevention of COVID-19 In the French Caribbean Island of Martinique

NEW YORK, March 12, 2020 – The Martinique Tourism Authority, the Port of Martinique, the Martinique International Airport are closely monitoring the island's points of entry to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and ensure the safety of its residents and visitors.

As reported by the director of the Regional Health Agency's (A.R.S.), the island is and remains in Stage 1 of a 3-stage prevention protocol established by the French Government in 2009 following the H1N1 flu epidemic. Stage 1 is prevention and all procedures and protective measures are in place:

* All disembarking cruise passengers are being systematically screened. Anchorage, to come ashore for smaller luxury boats, is no longer permitted. They must go to port terminals to be screened by the Regional Health Agency of Martinique.

Safety protocols are posted and implemented in all marinas and small ports.

* As of Thursday, March 5, 2020, sanitary measures are being enforced by the Regional Health Agency of Martinique with the presence of firefighters.

* Since, February 29, 2020, prevention notices have been posted at the airport and since March 4, airline passengers are given these notices prior to landing

* Additional sanitary inspectors have been positioned at the airport

* **Martinique's main hospital** is prepared for any changes in this sanitary crisis, readied isolation units and expanded its testing capabilities

On March 12th, 4 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were announced by the Regional Health Agency (A.R.S.) in Martinique. These 4 cases are currently in isolation at the CHU Martinique Hospital, La Meynard, in a special and sheltered quarantine unit.

A crisis division was immediately activated by the ARS, to search for, identify and monitor contact cases: people who have had close and prolonged contact with infected patients.

In anticipation of this global outbreak, the A.R.S. and the CHU Martinique Hospital have been proactively preparing in the event of a confirmed case in the island.

Speaking on this topic, the director of the Martinique Tourism Authority, Mr. François Languedoc-Baltus noted that “it is very important that our guests be aware that the regional and tourism authorities are prepared and have taken in the last weeks all the necessary steps to prevent and contain the virus.” He added that “Martinique has one of the best hospitals and healthcare systems in the Caribbean—on par with mainland France and the E.U.”

Meanwhile, the local population and visitors are reminded to follow established recommendations to prevent infection. These include:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw away after use or cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- If you have flu-like symptoms do not go to a doctor or hospital to avoid any spread of the virus and instead call emergency services, the SAMU (dial 15) and share your travel history. They will send a specialist to evaluate your symptoms.

For updates and more information about the COVID-19 and the measures in place in Martinique, please visit the A.R.S. website <http://www.martinique.gouv.fr/Politiques-publiques/Environnement-sante-publique/Sante/Les-informations-sur-le-Coronavirus-COVID-19>

About Martinique (us.martinique.org)

The French Caribbean Island of Martinique is also known as the Isle of Flowers, The Rum Capital of the World, the Birthplace of coffee in the New World, The Isle of the Famed Poet (Aimé Césaire) – Martinique ranks among the most alluring and enchanting destinations in the world. As an overseas region of France, Martinique boasts modern and reliable infrastructure – roads, water and power utilities, hospitals, and telecommunications, services all on par with any other part of the European Union. At the same time, Martinique’s beautifully unspoiled beaches, volcanic peaks, rainforests, 80+ miles of hiking trails, waterfalls, streams, and other natural wonders are unparalleled in the Caribbean, so visitors here truly get the best of both worlds. The currency is the Euro, the flag and the official language are French, but Martinique’s character, cuisine, musical heritage, art, culture, common language, and identity are of a distinctly Afro-Caribbean inclination known as Creole. It is this special combination of modern world conveniences, pristine nature, and rich heritage that has earned for Martinique several notable distinctions in recent years. Hot off the press: In January 2019 OprahMag.com listed Martinique first in “The 19 Best Winter Getaways.” Martinique is also featured in the Caribbean Journal’s Best Caribbean Islands to visit and Best Culture in 2019, in addition to naming the Isle of Flowers “Culinary Capital of the Caribbean”. Martinique has also been featured in Travel + Leisure and the New York Time’s “52 Places to Go.”