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Braemar's 'Western Caribbean & Central America' fly-cruise update - 18/03/2020 - 16.55

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines can confirm that the repatriation of guests aboard *Braemar* back to the UK has now begun.

Braemar is currently docked at the Port of Mariel, Havana, with transfers to take all 682 guests on board to Jose Marti Airport now underway.

On Tuesday, 10th March, one guest and four crew members received a positive diagnosis for COVID-19. One further guest, who provided an inconclusive result, was later confirmed to be positive. As a result, *Braemar* failed to receive clearance to disembark guests in Barbados on Thursday, 12th March.

Braemar spent three days in safe haven in The Bahamas, before Cuban Authorities granted permission for guests to return to the UK by air from Havana.

Peter Deer, Managing Director of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

“I would like to extend my sincere thanks on behalf of Fred Olsen to the Cuban Authorities, the Port of Mariel and the Cuban people for their support. Other countries would not allow *Braemar* to dock once we had confirmed cases of coronavirus on board. Thanks to their kindness we are now able to get people home. Your support will not be forgotten. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

“I would also like to thank the staff at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Transport, the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Health and Social Care. They have worked around the clock for many days to

find a way to bring our passengers home without having to resort to an Atlantic crossing. They managed to do this while also facing many other challenges around the world. I cannot thank them enough.

“I must also thank Captain Joso Glavic and his crew. They have had a very tough few weeks but they have put the guests’ needs above those of their own. This goes for the medical staff on board *Braemar* too.

“We must not forget the team who have been working all day and night on a solution for the *Braemar* passengers back at our Head Office in Ipswich, Suffolk. They have gone above and beyond to find a resolution. Thank you to them.

“Finally, I would like to thank our guests and their families back home for being so understanding during this unprecedented situation. It has not been an easy few days for anyone.

“For the time being we must focus on being healthy and supporting the most vulnerable. But I look forward to a time we can begin cruising again.”

Three flights have been chartered from British Airways to fly guests to London Heathrow Terminal 5, the first of which will take off from Havana at 18.00hrs local time (10pm UK time).

The flights will land into London Heathrow at approximately 07.00, 09.00 and 11.00 UK time.

Any guests who have received a positive diagnosis for coronavirus, or have displayed any flu-like symptoms, plus their companions, will return to the UK on a separate flight, arriving into MoD Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. This has been secured in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

All guests on this flight will have medical professionals available and will have support with any onward travel arrangements or requirements from Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In accordance with advice from Public Health England, all guests on this flight will be required to self-isolate for 7 days from the date they first showed symptoms if they live alone, or 14 days if they live with others.

Due to the early arrivals of these flights, the dedicated Braemar Relative Support Team will be operating revised hours of 06.00 to 15.00. Relatives can reach this team by calling +44 (0) 1473 292350.

We are making arrangements for guests flying back to London Heathrow, including access to coach transfers to either London Gatwick or Manchester airports, where their outbound flights for this cruise departed from. Guests booked via a Tour Operator should wait to receive more information from them.

While guests on the British Airways flights into London Heathrow will not currently be required to self-isolate, we would encourage everyone to monitor the latest updates from Public Health England on their return home.

Any guests who are considered not to be well enough to fly will be offered support and medical treatment in Cuba.

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