



**PRESS SECRETARY**

Prime Minister's Office  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Ministerial Complex  
Botanical Gardens, St. George, Grenada

Email: [pmprssecc@pmo.gov.gd](mailto:pmprssecc@pmo.gov.gd)

Email: [pmprsseccretary@gmail.com](mailto:pmprsseccretary@gmail.com)

Phone: 473-440-2255 ext 22910

Mobile: 473-534-2003

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**GOV'T CONTINUES TO EVALUATE AND REFINE BORDER OPENING PROTOCOLS**

**June 30, 2020** – The Government of Grenada is continuing to evaluate and refine the protocols that will guide the re-opening of the country's borders to commercial flights.

July 1, 2020 was the suggested date for reopening. However, in his address to the nation Sunday night, Prime Minister, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, said there is still work to be done.

Dr. Mitchell said, "Our protocols may be perceived as rigorous, but they have to be, because public health and safety are at risk. We have tested and evaluated the protocols and identified areas for improvement."

Grenada's full list of protocols is expected to be finalised, approved and publicised soon.

The increasing number of cases in the United States which is one of Grenada's main source markets for tourists, presents an area of concern for Government.

Dr. Mitchell said, "As the global pandemic continues to spiral out of control, there is a corresponding increase in the potential for importation of the virus if we open our borders without the necessary protocols in place. At this point, we continue to work on the finalisation of protocols before we begin to accept commercial flights."

There also exists some differences between the operating guidelines of commercial airlines and the protocols developed by the Government. As a result, the Prime Minister indicated that, "for the immediate future, Grenada will only continue to welcome chartered flights as these offer greater levels of due diligence, with respect to the established protocols which include testing before departure, testing upon arrival and agreement to bear the cost of quarantine. Commercial airlines have thus far not agreed to make it mandatory for passengers to test prior to travel and this is contrary to Grenada's protocols."

The Prime Minister noted that while it is not practical to keep the borders closed indefinitely, at the same time, public health and safety cannot be compromised.

He said, "Many are wishing we can remain in the protective bubble that has kept us safe since March and that we can maintain the COVID-free status announced earlier this month. However, this is not a practical, long-term option. Caribbean countries may

not have reached consensus on when to re-open our borders, but given the importance of tourism, this is generally regarded as one of the critical milestones in the effort to restart economies. The timing, however, must be right, and public health remains of paramount importance.”

The Prime Minister has empathised with nationals who are stranded overseas and he issued an appeal for them to understand that the overarching priority is to protect all citizens, therefore Government must take all steps to limit the potential importation of COVID-19.

While the actual reopening of borders remains pending, Grenada continues to prepare for when commercial flights resume. Workers in the accommodation, transport and food and beverage sectors have been participating in intensive training sessions to ensure that there is consistency in the country’s approach to dealing with visitors.

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