



**PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, May 6, 2024

Arrangements in train for Safe Departure of Charter Flight USC GmbH

The Ministry of National Security wishes to update the public on the arrangements in place to supervise the departure of the USC GmbH flight, a German registered aircraft, with 253 passengers, including crewmembers.

The flight arrived in Jamaica legally on Thursday May 2, 2024, having received the requisite approvals for operation from the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority. Despite having arrangements in place for accommodation and departure from the country, the passengers were refused entry by immigration officials, based on security concerns uncovered during their processing at the airport. The Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) in collaboration with the Jamaica Constabulary Force has been leading the operational response since their arrival.

Passenger flights are routinely screened by local authorities for security threats, possible breaches of law and/or regulations. In this instance, while the Ministry was alerted to the operation of the flight based on what appeared to be anomalies and missing details from its initial permit application, the necessary supporting documents were later supplied to satisfy the requirements for obtaining a permit to operate to Jamaica.

Notwithstanding, the Ministry continued to consult with law enforcement while the flight received clearance to operate, and the immigration authorities undertook pre-screening activities, as per standard operating procedures.

Upon landing in Jamaica, it was discovered that there were two passengers on the flight that did not appear on the submitted passenger manifest. This led to further investigations by PICA and based on those enhanced checks, the decision was taken by PICA, not to grant the passengers leave to land in Jamaica. Given the duration of the flight, as well as civil aviation regulations for the minimum rest period, before clearance is given to safely operate, it was deemed impractical to detain the passengers in the plane or at the airport.

Having regard to their reservations at the ROK Hotel in downtown Kingston, the travellers and airline crewmembers were allowed to leave the airport on humanitarian grounds, and escorted to the hotel by law enforcement and immigration personnel. This form of supervised release is in keeping with the provisions of the Immigration Restriction (Commonwealth Citizens) Act and Aliens Act.



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The passengers remain accounted for and are currently at the Norman Manley International Airport, awaiting the finalization of arrangements for their departure. The cost of their accommodation and return will solely be the responsibility of the Charter Company and not the Government of Jamaica.

The Ministries with responsibility for National Security, and Science, Energy, Telecommunications and Transport will continue to collaborate on protocols governing the operation of chartered flights, which remains a significant contributor to the Jamaica's tourism product and aviation industry.

The Ministry takes this opportunity to commend the operational teams for their professional response, and will continue to provide updates as the situation develops.

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