

U.S. RECOMMENDS AVOIDING TRAVEL TO TANZANIA AS THE COUNTRY DENIES ANY COVID-19 CASES



The U.S. Embassy in Tanzania has recommended avoiding travel to Tanzania amid the “significant increase” in the number of coronavirus cases, which, added to the poor health care facilities of the African country, means that waiting to receive medical care in an emergency could result in “life-threatening” delays at some hospitals.

In Tanzania, there has been no official coronavirus cases for several months, and the country's authorities are refusing to vaccinate and suggest using traditional medicine as prevention of Covid. At the same time, hospitals are filled with people with pneumonia, and **several Russian tourists who recently returned from Tanzania have already been diagnosed with coronavirus.**

In a statement, the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, in the east of the country, announced that despite the increased incidence of the pandemic, mitigation and prevention measures “remain limited”.

“The Tanzanian government has not released aggregate numbers on COVID-19 cases or deaths since April 2020,” said the United States, warning at the same time that health care facilities in the African nation “can be quickly overwhelmed in a healthcare crisis”.

“Limited hospital capacity throughout Tanzania could result in life-threatening delays for emergency medical care,” the statement warns.

Following the statement, the U.S. Department of State decided to place Tanzania in travel advisory level 3, recommending its citizens to reconsider their travels, although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was blunter and states travelers should avoid all travel to Tanzania.

Although the United States has announced that effective since January 26, all travelers who intend to enter the country must provide a negative PCR test for coronavirus taken within three days, it has questioned the reliability of the measures in this regard made available by the government of Tanzania.

“COVID-19 testing is available through Government of Tanzania laboratories”. However, “the details of testing (including test type and performance characteristics) have not been made available or independently verified”.

“While tests results are often received within 72 hours, results are not always returned within a timely manner and there are reports of individuals receiving inconclusive results and being asked to repeat the test after several days. Travelers have tested positive upon arrival in foreign destinations following negative COVID-19 tests in Tanzania prior to departure,” adds the statement.

One of the favorite holiday destinations is the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar which sees itself as “Corona-free”. The fact is however that Covid-19 tests have not been carried out for months here. Tourists can enter without restrictions, only a temperature measurement is carried out at the

airport. As a rule, however, this does not lead to a test or quarantine obligation.

According to travelers who were in Zanzibar lately, face masks are hardly to be seen on the island, but parties and football games take place quite normally. Restaurants are also full.

The rating company Skytrax took a closer look at the Zanzibar airport and reported on the situation: "We are shocked about the poor health and safety standards at Abeid Amani Karume International Airport," said Edward Plaisted from the company. "Our teams have carried out Covid-19 audits at airports in many parts of the world for the past eight months, and this airport is worse than we could ever have imagined." Corona security protocols are simply not in place.

According to a recent report, the number of tourists in Zanzibar in the past two months is roughly back at the previous year's level. For all these reasons, the United States Embassy, in addition to recommending all individuals to take caution regarding coronavirus, offers "only limited Consular services" by appointment through its website.

Although the CDC of Africa does not have conclusive data on the pandemic situation in Tanzania, the Johns Hopkins University estimates around 509 confirmed cases and 21 deaths, **very small figures compared to its neighboring countries, such as Kenya, with more than 102,000 confirmed cases and nearly 1,800 deaths.**

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