

Brazil orders French couple hospitalized over virus

February 28 2020

A French couple traveling in Brazil and suspected of being infected with the new coronavirus have been hospitalized against their will after a court ruled Friday that authorities had the right to hold them.

The Rio de Janeiro state court said it had decided in favor of local authorities in the coastal city of Paraty in the case, but did not give further details, citing privacy laws.

The couple arrived in Rio de Janeiro from Barcelona on February 20, and then traveled Monday to Paraty, a picturesque colonial city on Brazil's southeastern coast, news site G1 reported, citing [city officials](#).

They were admitted to the hospital Thursday with flu-like symptoms, and were designated as suspected coronavirus cases after undergoing exams.

The tourists, however, repeatedly said they wanted to leave the hospital.

In Brazil, which confirmed its first case of coronavirus Wednesday, the [health ministry](#)'s current protocol makes hospitalization optional in suspected cases, depending on the patient's condition.

But Paraty officials argued the couple should remain in hospital for at least 48 hours while awaiting conclusive laboratory results.

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