

Swedish health officials urge Iran air travel ban

March 2 2020

Swedish health officials on Monday urged transport authorities to ban flights from Iran over coronavirus fears, saying Tehran was "not in control" of the outbreak on its soil.

Sweden has 14 confirmed cases of the virus, including two who had travelled to Iran and four cases traced to those two travellers, according to newspaper Expressen.

The Middle Eastern country has reported 1,501 cases, including 66 deaths in total.

"To continue to take in large groups of passengers from Iran under present circumstances would severely complicate the work to limit the spread of COVID-19," Johan Carlson, director of the Public Health Agency of Sweden, said in a statement.

It added that "responsible authorities in Iran are not in control of the situation" and it feared the spread of the virus in Sweden.

Speaking to AFP, Carlson said the agency was not planning any similar measures for other airlines flying to other heavily affected countries.

The agency never asked for any bans of flights to and from China, and Carlson explained this was because they had better working relationships with Chinese authorities and airlines.

"This is a very exceptional situation and it goes back to that we are not really confident in what's happening in Iran today," Carlson said.

A spokeswoman for the transport agency said it would look into the matter and would likely announce a decision later Monday.

Iran Air is currently the only carrier offering direct flights between Sweden and Iran, with a weekly [flight](#) to Gothenburg and two flights a week to Stockholm.

Stockholm last week advised against all non-necessary travel to Iran.

Swedish health authorities also raised the risk assessment level for a general spread of the virus from "low" to "moderate" on Monday, and said the risk that more cases would emerge was "very high."

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Citation: Swedish health officials urge Iran air travel ban (2020, March 2) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-swedish-health-urge-iran-air.html>

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