Israel to require COVID tests for foreign arrivals from China: ministry

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The Israeli health ministry said Friday it will impose COVID tests on foreigners intending to travel from China, where coronavirus cases have surged.

"It was decided to order that foreign airlines only accept foreign citizens on a flight from China to Israel if they have tested (negative) for COVID," Health Minister Aryeh Deri said in a statement.

The minister, part of a new government sworn in on Thursday, urged Israelis to avoid travel to China. He said a screening centre would be opened to test arrivals who volunteered.

Coronavirus infections have surged in China, overwhelming hospitals as it unwinds hardline controls that torpedoed the economy and sparked nationwide protests.

A growing number of countries, including the United States, have imposed restrictions on all visitors from mainland China after Beijing decided to end mandatory quarantine on arrival, prompting many jubilant Chinese to make plans to travel abroad.

But the European Union's health agency said Thursday such restrictions weren't warranted in the bloc.

Chinese citizens have been largely confined to their country since Beijing pulled up the drawbridge in March 2020.

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