Turkish Cypriots bar entry to non-residents over virus

14 March 2020

Authorities in northern Cyprus have said only Turkish Cypriots and legal residents will be allowed into the breakaway north of the island until April 1, as a precaution against the coronavirus.

Turkish Cypriot prime minister Ersin Tatar announced the measure after a cabinet meeting that lasted almost six hours on Friday.

Only Turkish Cypriot citizens and "legal residents" with residence and work permits will be allowed into the breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus by land, air or sea until April 1, he said.

The Mediterranean island is divided between areas under the control of the Republic of Cyprus, an EU member state, and the breakaway TRNC, which is recognised only by Ankara.

Turkish Cypriot authorities reported their first case of coronavirus on Tuesday—a 65-year-old German tourist.

Four more people have since tested positive in the north, bringing the total to five—four German tourists and one Turkish Cypriot who arrived from Britain.

The Cyprus government has announced 21 cases in the Greek Cypriot south. It too has announced it will ban entry to non-residents for 15 days.

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