Dutch find 14 Omicron cases among S.Africa passengers

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Dutch health authorities said Monday they have found another case of the new Omicron COVID-19 variant among passengers arriving from South Africa, bringing the total to 14.

"With the help of sequencing, it has now been confirmed in 14 people that it is the Omicron variant," Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said in a letter to parliament.

De Jonge had on Sunday announced 13 Omicron infections. They were among 61 passengers who were confirmed with coronavirus, out of 624 travellers who arrived in Amsterdam on two KLM flights from South Africa on Friday.

Analysis of the samples "suggests that the people affected may have the virus most likely contracted in several places and in any case not during the flight", de Jonge said.

The results of further samples under analysis are expected later Monday.

Dutch authorities have ordered the 61 people who tested positive for COVID to remain in quarantine, and most of them are in a hotel near Schiphol Airport.

A couple fled the hotel on Sunday, but border police arrested them on a plane that was about to take off for Spain and the pair are now in isolation in hospital.

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