



NEWS

Mandatory stays at COVID quarantine hotels are illegal, Iceland court rules

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View of Reykjavik, the capital city of Iceland, in late winter season.

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By Pete Baklinski

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REYKJAVIK, Iceland, April 14, 2021 (LifeSiteNews) – A district court in Iceland's capital city of Reykjavik ruled in seven cases last week that forcing people to stay at a quarantine hotel is illegal.

The Reykjavík District Court ruled that the provisions of Art. Regulation 355/2021 on forcing passengers coming from other countries with significant COVID cases to stay in quarantine hotels “lacks legal basis,” the government stated about the ruling on its website.

The government had mandated, beginning April 1, that all travelers arriving in Iceland from countries with a high number of COVID cases must quarantine in hotels designated by the government. Travelers were required to stay at the quarantine hotel until they received the result of a second COVID-19 test proving that they did not have the virus.

After the ruling, those in quarantine hotels were released and informed that they were free to complete quarantine elsewhere.

Iceland Monitor reported April 6 that guests of at least four hotel rooms immediately decided to leave the quarantine hotel after the ruling.

The Ministry of Health says it is now reviewing the ruling. Health Minister Svandís Svavarsdóttir met with the Icelandic parliament last week to discuss the creation of a bill to provide a legal basis for forcing travelers to stay at a quarantine facility.

Chief Epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason told Bylgjan radio last week that the ruling is a major blow to the country.

“I think this is preventing one of the most effective measures being used to try to prevent this virus from entering the country and spreading,” he said, adding that he hopes a new law will make quarantine hotels a reality.

Critics have warned that mandatory stays at quarantine hotels are a heavy-handed approach to maintaining health that do little to curb the spread of the virus while stripping citizens of their rights and freedoms.
