



**Statement by
Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell
Prime Minister and Minister of National Security
Grenada's Borders Remain Closed
April 11, 2020**

Fellow Grenadians, I urge you to remember that the borders of our country remain closed to all internal and external travel, except as provided for in the Emergency Powers (COVID-19) Regulations. Although cultural norms and practices allow for seamless travel between our sister islands and the neighbouring Grenadine islands, the danger we now face from the COVID-19 pandemic means we must adopt new approaches to how we do things. We must embrace our new normal, it is our best chance of surviving this crisis.

Government's decision to close the borders was taken after careful consideration, given the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on countries around the world. It is intended to be a protective barrier to prevent the spread of the virus here in Grenada. In other words, sisters and brothers, it is a mechanism instituted by the Government to protect you, the people.

Healthcare systems in many countries are visibly overwhelmed; people are dying by the hundreds, even the thousands in some places. While the whole world is fighting at various stages of the pandemic, this is not the reality we want to see in Grenada. Although, we have significantly bolstered the readiness of our own healthcare system to deal with the impact of COVID-19, we cannot let our guard down and run the risk of seeing mass infection of this virus.

It is important therefore that we adhere to the precautionary measures instituted. While we fully understand the challenges many of us face in this period of uncertainty, the State of Emergency is in place because it is in the best interest of our nation and to safeguard our people.

The selfish and irresponsible actions of a few can have a detrimental impact on our success in the fight against COVID-19 thus far. Although Grenada has now recorded 14 cases of the novel coronavirus to date, there is still no evidence of community spread and we must do all in our power to prevent this from happening.

Therefore, it is unwise for us to jeopardise our health, the health of our loved ones, the health of our community, by travelling to neighbouring islands. It is necessary to reiterate that while this may be contrary to our traditional way of doing things and ordinarily, we embrace the close ties we share with our neighbouring islands, the times

are far from normal and we have to accept that change is a necessary part of this new reality.

Many countries have instituted stringent measures while others have opted for a more relaxed approach, which in some cases, have resulted in dire consequences. In the fluidity of the pandemic, it may be hard to say which is the right or wrong approach, but countries retain a sovereign right to determine what works best and when decisions are made, citizens must abide by the laws of their respective countries. Even in the midst of a pandemic, the law must prevail.

It is alarming that our citizens will be called upon to break the law by the leader of another country. It is a grossly irresponsible action that has the potential for not only legal consequences but also pose a significant threat to public health and public safety.

My fellow Grenadians, particularly our brothers and sisters in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, do not be misguided into flouting the law of the land; do not knowingly endanger your health and that of your family. I encourage you to think and act wisely. There is no shortage of food and we are continuously revising our operations to ensure that we optimise the distribution of goods and restocking of grocery stores.

I assure all citizens that the Government of Grenada continues to be at work, making decisions that are in the best interest of our country - decisions that first and foremost, protect public health and safety.