

## **Air Canada Proudly Brings Thousands of Canadians Home**

Compilation video available at <https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home/fly/fly-the-flag.html>

MONTREAL, April 20, 2020 /CNW Telbec/ - As its special flights operated in collaboration with the Government of Canada draw to an end, Air Canada today saluted hundreds of its employees who have worked to fly thousands of stranded Canadians home. The program, which began March 21, has repatriated approximately 6,600 Canadians from Morocco, Spain, Ecuador, Peru, Algeria, Argentina, and Colombia.

"Overnight, the COVID-19 crisis struck the entire planet in unprecedented ways and thousands of our fellow Canadians found themselves stranded abroad as a result of the numerous restrictions quickly imposed by various governments," said Ferio Pugliese, Senior Vice President, Air Canada Express and Government Relations at Air Canada. "Heartfelt thanks must first be given to our crews, who agreed to be on the front lines to support these thousands of people eager to get home to be among their loved ones during these difficult times. The tireless efforts, dedication, compassion and professionalism of our employees on the ground and the terrific job they did expertly carrying out these complex, global operations have been nothing short of exemplary. Our customers and their families have shared with us their relief and feeling as if they were already home, once they boarded our flights, and we are proud to bring them back to Canada."

In total, Air Canada operated 21 special flights using wide-body aircraft in close cooperation with Global Affairs Canada. Air Canada remains available to operate additional special flights in collaboration with the federal government. The program to date has included:

- Seven flights from Lima
- Four flights from Quito
- Three flights from Casablanca
- Four flights from Algiers
- One flight from Barcelona
- One flight from Bogotá
- One flight from Buenos Aires

"Over the past few weeks, we have mounted one of the largest repatriation operations of Canadian travellers stranded abroad in the country's history. All returning travellers are subject to a mandatory self-isolation period of 14 days. We faced unprecedented obstacles, from airspace closures to tight travel restrictions," said François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs. "Air Canada played a vital role in bringing thousands of our fellow Canadians home. I want to thank all those who worked day and night to make this major undertaking possible."

### **Over 300,000 Canadians transported on Air Canada's commercial flights**

Despite a significant reduction in its network, Air Canada continues its repatriation efforts on its regular commercial flights. Since March 15, it has brought more than 300,000 passengers back to

Canada from Asia, Europe, Caribbean/South America and the United States. This included Canadians repatriated from India, South Africa, Croatia, Serbia and the UAE through its London-Heathrow air link.

### **Nearly 250 tonnes of PPE delivered across the country**

Through Air Canada Cargo, Air Canada continues its operations to transport medical supplies and essential goods. Since March 1<sup>st</sup>, it has carried nearly 250 tonnes of personal protective equipment (PPE) across the country. The first flight full of freight on Air Canada's converted Boeing 777-300 ER aircraft arrived on April 18 from Shanghai via Narita with more than 20 tonnes of face masks, many for Canadian front-line health care workers. Air Canada has operated 106 all-cargo flights since March 22 between Asia, Europe, South America, and Canada and plans to operate up to 20 all-cargo flights per week using a combination of the three newly converted Boeing 777s and Boeing 787s, in addition to current scheduled flights to London, Paris, Frankfurt, and Hong Kong. Air Canada Cargo has been working with its supply chain partners and shippers to transport medical supplies from Asia and Europe to Canada and will continue exploring additional opportunities as needed in all regions of the globe. Its freight division has long been a key player and a crucial link in global supply chains, and the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are making cargo capacities more important than ever.

### **Over 14,000 kg of food re-distributed across Canada**

To date, Air Canada and the Air Canada Foundation have donated 14,118 kg of food items originally intended for Air Canada flights, the equivalent of nearly 31,000 meals to be redistributed to help support Canadian families in need. This national food rescue effort through Second Harvest has directly supported 17 organizations across the country from Vancouver to Halifax, including Leduc & District Food Bank, Leftovers Foundation, DreamMind Inc., among several others.

### **About Air Canada**

Air Canada is Canada's largest domestic and international airline. Canada's flag carrier is among the 20 largest airlines in the world and in 2019 served over 51 million customers. Air Canada is a founding member of Star Alliance, the world's most comprehensive air transportation network. Air Canada is the only international network carrier in North America to receive a Four-Star ranking according to independent U.K. research firm Skytrax, which also named Air Canada the 2019 Best Airline in North America. For more information, please visit: [aircanada.com/media](https://aircanada.com/media), follow @AirCanada on [Twitter](#) and join Air Canada on [Facebook](#).

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