MIAMI, United States. – Some 100 Argentine tourists are stranded in Havana since June 14th due to the retention in Argentina of a Venezuelan-Iranian aircraft that is the subject of an investigation for alleged links to terrorist organizations, according to the news daily Clarín.

The aircraft is a Boeing 737-300, registration number YV630T, whose last registered flight was between Cuba and Argentina on Saturday, June 11th, shortly after the scandal about its alleged links with terrorism broke.

Cubana de Aviación had engaged the charter flight from Estelar, a private Venezuelan airline close to Nicolás Maduro’s regime, to cover an itinerary between Havana and Ezeiza, Argentina.

Following the scandal, Argentine authorities have refused to provide fuel to Estelar’s airplane, resulting in the cancellation of flights programmed between Cuba and Ezeiza.

According to Clarín, the Argentine citizens stranded in Cuba planned to return to
their country on June 14th, June 16th and 18th, but all flights were cancelled.

“Cubana de Aviación has announced that it is cancelling its operations to Buenos Aires scheduled for tomorrow, Saturday June 18th at 3:25 local time, since as of this writing, 5:32 p.m. Friday, June 17th, we have not obtained the operational permits, and the refusal to provide fuel to the aircraft hired by Cubana de Aviación from Venezuelan airline Estelar, continues,” according to a notice sent to the passengers by Ricardo González Sánchez, Estelar’s representative in Varadero.

In the meantime, the Argentine tourists have started to condemn the situation and to claim consular attention to their plight.

“Amongst us Argentine tourists, there are people with work problems, passengers with cardiac afflictions and hypertension, who no longer have medication supplies, and here, Havanatur Varadero, who committed to finding said medications, still has not done so. We don’t know who else to ask that another airline be engaged to take us back to Argentina,” stated one of the tourists to Clarín.

“We spoke to the Consulate, and the consul told us that the problem they are having has to do with documentation they should have filed if they were going to fly us back home in a flight that was not authorized by Argentina to fly over its territory. We have heard no news, nobody is communicating with us. We don’t know when we are leaving, or how we are leaving, or if we are leaving. We are in trouble and worried,” stated Luis Alberto Gui, another tourist stranded in Cuba.

Meanwhile, Patricia Vega lamented that they find themselves “without any kind of answer, without any certainty on the part of Cuba. We do not understand the reason why Cubana cannot replace Estelar with another airline. Nobody is answering that question,” she denounced.

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