

"I am currently being held in mandatory quarantine at the Stamford Plaza with my two children aged 13, and 9.

I am objecting to our detention both from our experience, and as a health professional who has worked in hospitals and community health for 20 years, and as a public health practitioner with a Master of Public Health in International Health.

This is not a complaint about the hotel or nursing staff.

Background - I was a humanitarian worker in Spain with my family for 5 years. We were back in Spain to wrap up paperwork, etc from when we lived there and got stuck in lockdown.

The experience of this mandatory quarantine is dehumanising.

1. Mental Health

Unless you have been locked in a room for 14 days without any access to fresh air, sunlight, and any freedom or autonomy then you cannot pass judgement on how difficult this is for our mental health. We have had a very stressful time getting back, and now we feel like prisoners with security guards outside our door, 4 security guards that watch us as we run up and down a 20m section of Alfred Place Alley in our only outside time, and public opinion totally against us because we are "probably bringing back coronavirus".

If we tested positive to the virus in the community we would NOT be forced into detention, but here we are because we MIGHT have coronavirus. We have all tested negative to COVID-19.

The kids are finding it very difficult to deal with this detention, and this is despite the fact that when we were in Spain the whole country was under house arrest for 6 weeks. This is much harder with a total loss of liberty and autonomy in a strange and insecure environment, strangers knocking at the door, guards, etc.

2. Health and safety.

We are more likely to catch COVID-19 by being locked in a hotel with other returned travelers than if we were allowed to quarantine at home. As a result, I have refused the second round of testing for COVID-19. I am concerned about the nurses travelling room to room with the same cart, the same face masks etc and potentially giving us COVID-19 from other travelers. In a hospital we would have a tray of supplies in each room exclusive to that patient. All the medical staff here wear the same masks, gloves etc between rooms/travelers which means they are protected - for which I am glad - but what about us? For this reason we have refused the exercise sessions also, to stay away from the guards and the public areas of the hotel.

Every other member of society has a right to choose to stay home, choose to not meet others to lower their risk. But we are denied this right and made to stay 14 days in a facility not set up for healthcare, surrounded by lots of people who are more likely to actually have COVID-19.

3. Chronic illness.

I have an autoimmune disease and am on immunosuppressive medication to treat this. [REDACTED]

I hope I do not catch COVID-19 as a result of being detained with other returned travelers.

Which is my main objection – I cannot believe this detention is mandatory even for disabled persons, those with mental health issues, the elderly and those with dementia, and children and pregnant women. Why have they lost their right to self manage their health and well-being because they MIGHT have COVID-19 when everybody else in the community is only required to self isolate at home? The hotel does not provide pressure bedding, roho cushions, non-slip flooring in showers, etc for its patients. But travelers would have all the things they need at home.

This hotel quarantine should be offered to people who would like to avail themselves of it, just as accommodation is being offered to me as a hospital worker for when I return to work. For all others it should be mandatory *home* quarantine. Please read about Hong Kong is managing their returned travelers.

I want my concerns to be answered by a senior health worker with experience in healthcare. These are genuine concerns as both a human being, and a health professional."