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March 25, 2020

The Honorable Hugo de Zela
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Peru to the United States
Embassy of Peru in the United States
1700 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ambassador Zela:

As I am sure you are aware, the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic has left many United States citizens stranded in Peru. I understand there may be thousands of Americans still in Peru because the country has shut down its borders in response to the ongoing pandemic. Many of these individuals are my constituents, and I have been in contact with them in their efforts to return home. The unplanned extension of their time in Peru has created additional challenges—some are now without essential medications and others are without sufficient funds. They are having trouble getting home—and it is in all of our interests to help them do so. Each additional day creates additional problems that can be alleviated if they can return home to the U.S.

I am particularly concerned that two repatriation flights scheduled on March 24 were unsuccessful. It is my understanding that on March 23, the Government of Peru told the U.S. Ambassador to Peru, Krishna Urs, it had authorized the flights, but at approximately 9:30pm that same day, LATAM Airlines notified the U.S. Embassy that the Peruvian National Institute of Civil Defense (INDECI) had not approved its flight. The following morning, Ambassador Urs spoke with the Peruvian Foreign Minister and was assured that permissions would be granted in time for these repatriation flights. But the Peruvian government did not clear these flights, and the planes were unable to land in Peru.

I urge you to do all in your power to work with your government to solve these interdepartmental miscommunications so that American citizens can return home as soon as possible. It is essential that our governments communicate effectively in these times of crisis. I appreciate your attention to this matter, and I am ready to assist you in any way I can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lizzie Fletcher".

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress