



BUDGET AIRLINE RYANAIR TELLS BRITS 'PAY £6,000 TO FLY HOME FROM BRUSSELS'

News / Airlines, Airports / Routes



Ryanair told a group of Britons they would have to pay up to £6,000 if they wanted to fly home from Brussels on Tuesday evening after the city was rocked by two terror attacks, which left 34 dead and 240 injured, an MP has said.

Labour MP for Sefton Central Bill Esterson told the House of Commons: *"I have been contacted by a number of my constituents who are in Brussels, who travelled there today and are trying to get home, as I'm sure many others are as well."*

"They have been told by the airline Ryanair that it will cost them £6,000 to be brought back to this country."

RT called the airline to get a response to Esterson's claim and received an email from Ryan Air that, while not addressing the issue directly, tried to explain the circumstances surrounding the situation.

"This group of 28 passengers were travelling from Brussels Charleroi to Manchester tomorrow (Wednesday) at a fare of £20 each," the budget airline told RT.

"They arrived at the ticket desk in Brussels Charleroi this morning requesting to change their flight from Brussels Charleroi to today (Tuesday) and in common with all other passengers were offered this change at our change fee (£60) plus the upgrade to the available fare (£154) on this evening's flight.

"This group declined to accept this change offer as is their right and we look forward to welcoming them on their scheduled flight from Brussels Charleroi tomorrow," the statement said.

It went on to say that the upgrade fee was necessary because there were only 12 seats remaining on this evening's flight.

"As of 1.30pm today, there only 12 seats remaining on this evening's flight from Brussels Charleroi to Manchester as Ryanair has been prioritizing free changes and transfers for passengers travelling on flights to and from Brussels Zaventem today and tomorrow.

"We regret any inconvenience caused to this group but our priority today remains re-accommodating our disrupted Brussels Zaventem passengers, and all other passengers are free to avail of our change facility in the normal manner," the email concluded.

Esterson later asked ministers to help UK citizens stranded in Brussels.

"I wonder if, through you, Mr. Speaker, I can ask ministers if perhaps they might intervene and suggest to Ryanair and other carriers that all efforts are made to help those who want to come back to this country in a reasonable way," he said.

The Speaker said while this was a "matter of real and immediate concern" his hands were tied.

"That real and immediate concern will have been heard on the Treasury bench and, knowing your ingenuity, I feel sure that if you don't receive some sort of contact or reassurance from an appropriate quarter, you won't rest in continuing to highlight your concern," he said.

There were several explosions at Zaventem International Airport in Brussels early on Tuesday, and another at Maalbeek metro station in central Brussels.

The airport is currently closed and the Eurostar service running to Brussels was shut down earlier on Tuesday, but is now operating a limited service.

Public transport is now running in the Belgian capital. People based in Brussels have been advised to remain "alert and vigilant," stay away from crowded places, and follow the instructions of the Belgian security authorities.

One British national is believed to have been injured in the airport attack, Downing Street says.

Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has condemned the attacks.

"Today, our thoughts and sympathies are with the people of Brussels," he said, adding "We stand in solidarity with the victims of these horrific attacks, their friends and families, and the men and women of the emergency services."

Corbyn went on to say *"We must defend our security and values in the face of such terrorist outrages, and refuse to be drawn into a cycle of violence and hatred,"* stressing *"We take pride in our societies of diverse faiths, races and creeds and will not allow those who seek to divide us to succeed."*

Flags are being flown at half-mast on UK government buildings in solidarity with Belgium, while the Belgian flag has been raised over 10 Downing Street.

Security has been ramped up at British airports, the ports of Dover and Calais, London St Pancras International, and at east coast ports. Security has also been heightened at key transport intersections in London and on the Underground network.

23 MARCH 2016

SOURCE: RT

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