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Minister Aaron Motsoaledi: Re-opening of borders and ports of entry for international travellers during Coronavirus Covid-19 epidemic lockdown level 1

30 Sep 2020

Statement of the Minister of Home Affairs regarding the reopening of borders and services during Alert Level 1

All 18 land ports of entry will be opened with effect from 1 October 2020. The other 35 land ports of entry remain closed.

The Department of Home Affairs is extending the validity period of legally issued visas which expired during the lockdown period to 31 January 2021.

Holders of such visas are permitted to remain in the country under the conditions of their visas until 31 January 2021. Those wishing to be repatriated to their countries within this period can depart without being declared undesirable persons.

The Department is also resuming services for applications for identity cards or documents and for all types of passports.

Visa services, including submission of applications through VFS Global, will also resume in the following categories:

Visitor's visas; study visa; treaty visa; business visa; crew visa; medical treatment visa; relative's visa; general work visa; critical skills work visa; intra-company transfer work visa; retired person visa; corporate visa; exchange visa; waiver of prescribed requirement, as contemplated in section 31(2)(c); and appeals or reviews contemplated in section 8 of the Immigration Act.

Some of these services will also be available through our Missions abroad.

Any person from a country listed as having a high COVID-19 infection and transmission rate, who wish to undertake a business travel into South Africa, may with effect from 01 October 2020, in writing, apply to the Minister of Home Affairs and demonstrate reasons for their request to enter the Republic for business purposes during the period of the national state of disaster.

Such applications must be directed to email Covid19BusinessTravel@dha.gov.za and supported by—

- (a) a copy of passport and/or temporary residence visa;
- (b) proof of business activities to be undertaken in the Republic;
- (c) proof of travel itinerary; and
- (d) proof of address or accommodation in the Republic.

We need to remind our people that the fact that we are at level 1 lockdown, does not mean that the Covid-19 pandemic is over. We still have to take precautions, and some of them, might be very hard decisions to make. But this will be done in such a way that it strikes a balance between saving lives and livelihoods.

In this regard, the opening of international travel will follow a Risk Adjusted Approach. Earlier today, a list of high risk countries was read at a Press Conference. Unfortunately this list was not exhaustive, and might also have included some countries by mistake. We are hereby releasing the whole updated list, and we heartily apologize for any confusion and any inconvenience caused by the earlier release:

- Albania
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Austria
- Bahrain
- Belgium
- Bolivia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Brazil
- Chile

- Columbia
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Ecuador
- France
- Georgia
- Greece
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Honduras
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Israel
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Luxemburg
- Maldives
- Malta
- Mexico
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- North Macedonia
- Oman
- Palestine
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Portugal

- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Romania
- Russia
- Slovakia
- Suriname
- Switzerland
- Ukraine
- United Emirates
- United Kingdom
- USA
- Venezuela

We need to emphasize once more that people who are not allowed from these high risk countries are leisure travellers only. Other categories of people from these countries, are allowed under special conditions, as appears in the Regulations and Directions. The list of these high risk countries will also be found on the Home Affairs website; www.dha.gov.za

The above list will be reviewed every fortnight.

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