

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

2020-119 | March 26, 2020



Brazil - Travel Restrictions and Other Measures to Confront COVID-19 Crisis

In the past few days, Brazil's government has announced several travel restrictions for individuals coming to Brazil, in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the country.¹

While the measures have a few differences between them, all restrictions exempt the following individuals: Brazilian citizens, Brazil Permanent Residence Permit holders, foreigners on a mission serving an international organization, and diplomatic foreign officials accredited to the Brazilian government. Also, any freight transport and vehicles transporting goods are still allowed to cross the borders.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Brazil, like many other countries, is limiting cross-border travel into the country with significant impact for the mobility of a company's international workforce. The closing – for the most part – of Brazil's borders and other travel, entry-exit, and visa handling matters that have been announced will impact companies with assignee populations in terms of existing and future assignments inbound to Brazil or outbound from Brazil. Employees and their families who may have received offers for an international assignment to Brazil may need to postpone the commencement of the assignment (or may indeed be already there but on limited term visas). This could cause some anxiety, stress, and inconvenience, especially where plans for relocation are already underway or where they are already in Brazil and worried about their status should their temporary visas expire.

Companies with global presence and individuals operating across borders need to be increasingly aware of the relevant risks associated with travel, large-crowd events and conferences, and new work arrangements consequent to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Awareness of developments, which are unfolding rapidly, is vital to help minimise disruptions to operations and to manage associated risks and costs.

It is important to note that the consequences of failure to comply with the entry-exit restrictions described in this newsletter will potentially be immediate deportation and disqualification for future "refugee status" requests.

Venezuela

Firstly, the government implemented restrictions on travelers coming from Venezuela². As from March 17, 2020, individuals trying to cross the countries' land borders are prohibited from entering Brazil for 15 days.

Eight More South America Countries

On March 19, 2020, Brazil closed its land borders for 15 days with eight other South America neighboring countries³: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, and Suriname.

The measure does not apply to airports and, as Chile and Ecuador do not have land borders with Brazil, no limits were imposed by the Brazilian authorities to individuals coming from these countries.

Uruguay

Most recently, on March 22, 2020, Brazil's government announced that it is also closing land borders to individuals coming from Uruguay, for 30 days, effective immediately⁴.

European and Asian Countries

Additionally, on March 19, 2020, Brazil published a 30-day travel restriction⁵ for travelers from: the People's Republic of China, the European Union member states, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom & Northern Ireland, Australia, Japan, and Malaysia.

Travelers coming from South Korea and the United States have not been included in the official decisions.

KPMG NOTE

Brazil's population has been advised to stay at home in self-isolation as much as possible.⁶ Businesses have largely adhered to this policy and have requested that their employees work remotely or take early vacation.

Individuals who were planning to travel to Brazil to take up work and/or residence, are advised to discuss their situations and plans with their global mobility advisers and immigration/tax professionals as soon as possible.

Companies with global presence and individuals operating across borders need to be increasingly aware of the relevant risks associated with travel, large-crowd events and conferences, and new work arrangements consequent to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Travelers seeking to enter Brazil should regularly check the latest information from the nearest Brazilian embassy or consulate and should not travel from – or transit through – the above-mentioned areas without seeking appropriate advice.

Immigration and Restrictions on Permits and Applications

In view of the 15-day and 30-day travel restrictions, Brazil's Ministry of Justice has decided to not publish its Visa and Residence Permit application approvals in the Official Gazette (*Diário Oficial da União*) during this quarantine period.⁷ Therefore, the applicants' deadline to collect their approved documentation at their respective consulate is suspended, avoiding a negative impact on their visa length/validity period.

Despite the above, there are no changes in respect of the country's immigration legislation or visa eligibility for Brazil. However, foreign nationals who are already in Brazil are facing issues to regularize their immigration status, as the Brazil Federal Police is restricting its own operations in order to avoid the spread of the COVID-19.⁸

Appointments at the Federal Police for Passport applications and immigration status regularization, even if previously scheduled, are now limited to people in extremely urgent situations, which will be strictly analyzed by the authorities on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the 90-day legal deadline to issue new Passports, Residence Permits, and other immigration documents is temporarily suspended, for the duration of the crisis.

With the virus spread and all this uncertainty, it is likely that Federal Police services will experience significant delays in their processes, which may impact on foreign employees' waiting time when preparing to start their contracts in Brazil.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For news (in Portuguese) of the federal government's efforts to address the COVID-19 situation in Brazil, see the following government website: <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br> .

For some basic information on measures taken by the Brazilian government to combat COVID-19, see this webpage of the U.S. Embassy in Brazil: <https://br.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/> .

2 For more on the restrictions for travelers from Venezuela, see: [PORTARIA Nº 120, DE 17 DE MARÇO DE 2020](#).

3 For more on the Brazil land border closures with South American countries, see: [PORTARIA Nº 125, DE 19 DE MARÇO DE 2020](#). Also see the following Brazilian government webpage (in Portuguese): <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/acompanhe-o-planalto/noticias/2020/03/bolsonaro-anuncia-fechamento-de-fronteira-com-mais-oito-paises-para-conter-avanco-do-coronavirus>

4 For more on Brazil's land border closure with Uruguay, see: [PORTARIA Nº 132, DE 22 DE MARÇO DE 2020](#).

5 For more on Brazil's travel restrictions for other countries, see: [PORTARIA Nº 126, DE 19 DE MARÇO DE 2020](#).

6 See (in Portuguese) public health and safety policies implemented in Brazil (including quarantine and self-isolation) on the webpage "[Coronavírus: confira as medidas adotadas pelo Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública](#)" of the *Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública*.

7 For more on the new process for approved visas by the Ministry of Justice (in Portuguese), see: [https://portaldeimigracao.mj.gov.br/images/NOTICIAS/noticias/2020/Nota Técnica_01_2020 Portarias_125_126.pdf](https://portaldeimigracao.mj.gov.br/images/NOTICIAS/noticias/2020/Nota_Técnica_01_2020_Portarias_125_126.pdf) .

8 For more on the Brazil Federal Police measures (in Portuguese), see:

- <http://www.pf.gov.br/imprensa/noticias/2020/03-noticias-de-marco-de-2020/policia-federal-altera-o-atendimento-do-passaporte-e-aos-estrangeiros-em-virtude-da-pandemia> .
- <https://portaldeimigracao.mj.gov.br/pt/destaques-e-novidades/401317-nota-de-esclarecimento-alteracao-no-atendimento-presencial-na-coordenacao-geral-de-imigracao-laboral>.

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* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not provide any immigration services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Brazil.

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