



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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South Africa - COVID-19: Extension of Visa Concessions to Foreign Nationals

In line with National State of Disaster Regulations, South Africa's minister of the Department of Home Affairs has extended the validity period of the visa concessions to foreign nationals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to 31 October 2020.¹ Foreign nationals with legally-issued visas which expired during the lock-down period will be allowed to remain in South Africa and their visas will be deemed valid. (For prior coverage, see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-185](#), 20 April 2020.)

WHY THIS MATTERS

In what could bring a sigh of relief to many who were anxious about the validity of their expiring or soon-to-expire visas and their status in South Africa, the temporary residence visas of foreign nationals, which expired from 15 February 2020 and during the lock-down period, are deemed to be valid until 31 October 2020. Holders of such visas are permitted to remain in the country under the conditions of their visas and those who wish to be repatriated to their countries of origin within this period can depart without being declared an "undesirable person."

Visa Facilitation Services offices (VFS) are open by appointment only for collections regarding outcomes of visa applications submitted prior to the lock-down period and Refugee reception offices remain closed.

Special Entry Permission

The minister of Home Affairs has granted special provisions which allow certain categories of persons to be permitted entry into the country during the National State of Disaster. An application can be submitted to the minister of the Department of Home Affairs to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances of the request.

An inter-departmental committee which is comprised of the Department of Health, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition as well as the Department of Public Enterprise, will assist with the approval process.

Foreign nationals granted permission to return will be subjected to testing and self-isolation or quarantine measures upon their return.

FOOTNOTE:

1 See "[Home Affairs Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi extends the validity of visas which expired during the lockdown and calls for public comment into the draft South African Citizenship Act Regulations](#)" (published 1 August 2020) on the website of the Department of Home Affairs.

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Contact us

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

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