



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Botswana - Broad Measures Introduced by Government to Combat COVID-19 Threat

As part of its response to the coronavirus threat, the Botswana government has announced broad measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).¹ These measures include barring of entry into Botswana of travelers from the following high-risk countries: the People's Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, Iran, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and India.

Botswana citizens and residents returning from the affected countries will be subjected to mandatory quarantine for 14 days.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Botswana, 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 prohibition on entry into the country from individuals coming from high-risk countries and other travel, entry-exit, and visa handling measures that have been announced will impact companies with assignee populations in terms of existing and future assignments inbound to Botswana or outbound from Botswana. Employees and their families who may have received offers for an international assignment to Botswana may need to postpone the commencement of the assignment. This could cause some anxiety, stress, and inconvenience, especially where plans for relocation are already underway.

The changes wrought in travel and daily life in light of recent government measures, may mean delays, more administration, and a considerable amount of inconvenience for some companies, their affected employees, and the Botswana population, generally speaking, though it is in the interest of protecting public health and safety.

Broad Range of Measures and Effects of Health Crisis

Additional measures taken by the government to combat the spread of the virus include the following:

- suspension, with immediate effect, until further notice, of the issuance of visas at all embassies and ports of entry;
- cancellation of current visas issued to any person from high-risk countries;
- suspension of all international travel by employees of government, parastatals, and state-owned entities;
- cancellation of all government, state-owned entities, and parastatals international meetings and conferences;
- 30-day suspension, with immediate effect, of public gatherings of more than 100 people for conferences, sporting events, etc.

To help minimise the risk of contracting and spreading of the virus, citizens and residents of Botswana are to postpone travel to affected countries.

KPMG NOTE

These new travel restrictions will have considerable impact on travelers to Botswana including globally-mobile employees and their families.

Affected employers need to be aware of and keep abreast of these and any future changes in immigration rules in order to put in place policies that help manage or mitigate the associated work and employee welfare risks.

FOOTNOTE:

1 For President Masisi's recent press conference on COVID-19 measures, you may visit the Facebook site for the president at: <https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/2832225860193387> .

You may also view the 16 March 2020 Public Notice on COVID-19 issued by the government at: <https://www.gov.bw/sites/default/files/2020-03/Covid19.pdf> .

For some basic information on measures taken by the Botswana government to combat COVID-19 and some joint U.S.-Botswana efforts related to the COVID-19 crisis, see this webpage of the U.S. Embassy in Botswana: <https://bw.usembassy.gov/health-alert-u-s-embassy-gaborone-botswana/https://pl.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/> .

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Contact us

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* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not offer immigration services or labour law 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 Botswana.

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