

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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South Africa - COVID-19: Lockdown Extension and Visa/Immigration Changes

Further to the declaration of the National State of Disaster and the subsequent announcement of a nationwide lockdown, the president of South Africa has extended the nationwide lockdown until 30 April 2020 to continue with government efforts aiming to curb the spread of the coronavirus and COVID-19.¹ (For prior coverage, see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-118](#), 26 March 2020.)

WHY THIS MATTERS

Many foreign nationals with expired visas or whose visas are due to expire, are very anxious about their immigration status and consequences of non-compliance with the immigration law during and after the lockdown period. To allay these concerns, the Department of Home Affairs has outlined temporary measures on visa concessions to address these immigration matters.² These temporary measures will remain valid until 31 July 2020, unless extended officially by the Department of Home Affairs.

Temporary Measures - Visa Concessions and Visa Processing

- Foreign nationals with temporary residence visas which expired from 15 February 2020, who did not renew their visas before the lockdown, will not be declared illegal or prohibited persons.
- Those whose visas expired before or during the lockdown will not be arrested or detained for holding an expired visa.
- Those who opt to return to their countries of origin or residence after the lockdown instead of renewing their visas will not be declared “undesirable” upon departure.

- The Department of Home Affairs will not be accepting nor processing any visa or permanent resident permit applications during the lockdown period.
- Foreign nationals whose visas expired after 15 February 2020, may reapply for their respective visas while in the country immediately after the lockdown has been lifted and they will not be required to obtain a Form 20/Good Cause letter for authorisation to submit an application or to remain in the country.
- Foreign nationals whose visas expired during the lockdown and those who have submitted their applications before the lockdown but their applications are still pending, will be allowed to work, study, or conduct business after the lockdown while waiting for the outcome of their applications.
- During the lockdown, except for cases relating to expatriation initiated by another state, all foreign nationals who are currently in South Africa may not depart the country.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For some news on recent measures, including the president of South Africa’s 9 April announcement extending the lockdown through 30 April, see the [webpage](#) of the United States Embassy in South Africa.

2 For immigration-related news from the Department of Home Affairs, go to the department’s [website](#). For recent measures related to visas and entry to/departure from South Africa, see this Department of Home Affairs 14 April [announcement](#).

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[New Article in *Mobility Matters*!](#)

[“COVID-19 – Potential Impact on Expatriate Travel and Tax Costs”](#)

By Melissa Duffy and Carolyn Chambers, KPMG International member firm in South Africa

So much is changing every day as the impact of COVID-19 transforms the way we live and work. With travel restrictions, travel bans, border closures, “stay at home” and “shelter in place” policies, implemented to stem the spread of COVID-19, business patterns and employee work routines, and places of work, have been turned on their heads. As Carolyn Chambers and Melissa Duffy, KPMG professionals in South Africa, explain, this could lead to immigration status disruptions and increased tax costs. Read the [article](#).

Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in South Africa:



Carolyn Chambers
Director, GMS & ETA
Tel. + 27 83 440 5564
carolyn.chambers@kpmg.com



Lesego Matsheka
Senior Immigration Manager
Tel. + 27 82 719 5671
lesego.matsheka@kpmg.com

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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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