



# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

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# South Africa – COVID-19: Extension of Visa Concessions for Foreign Nationals

In line with National State of Disaster Regulations, South Africa's Minister of the Department of Home Affairs has issued Directions to extend the validity period of the visa concessions to foreign nationals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The Directions extend the initial validity period extension date of 31 March 2021.

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## WHY THIS MATTERS

Foreign nationals with short-term visas (tourist visas) which were issued for a period not longer than 90 days will have their visas extended to 30 June 2021, and those with long-term visas which were issued for a period of more than 90 days up to three years, will have their visas extended to 31 July 2021. These extensions may bring relief and comfort to individuals – and their employers – who were concerned about their status in the country and their ability to stay in light of the pandemic situation in South Africa. 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.

The extension does not apply to foreign nationals who entered the country from 15 March 2021, as the normal admission into the country will apply.

Holders of longer-term temporary visas such as study visa, treaty visa, business visa, medical treatment visa, relatives' visas, general work visa, critical skills work visa, retired person's visa, and exchange visa, which expired during the State of National Disaster, are invited to renew their visas at the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) before 31 July 2021.

Refugee Reception Offices remain closed and the validity period of asylum and refugee permits have been extended until 30 June 2021.

## Temporary Concession for Permanent Residents

The Minister of Home Affairs has further granted a blanket temporary concession of one year to all holders of Permanent Residence Permits to travel to South Africa on or before 31 December 2021, in order to activate their permanent residence permits or to remain in a foreign country for a period exceeding three years without risking the possibility of having their status as Permanent Residents withdrawn, in terms of Section 28 of the Immigration Act of 2002, as amended.

### FOOTNOTE:

1 See: <http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/statements-speeches/1430-home-affairs-minister-dr-aaron-motsoaledi-extends-the-validity-of-visas-which-expired-during-the-lockdown-to-30-june-2021-for-short-term-and-31-july-2021-for-long-term-visas> .

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## Contact us

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*\* Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration 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 South Africa.**

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