

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

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South Africa – Extension of Visa Concessions to Foreign Nationals

The newly appointed South African Minister of Home Affairs, Dr. Leon Schreiber, has extended the temporary visa concessions to safeguard foreign nationals who are currently awaiting the outcomes of their pending waivers, visas, and appeal applications from adverse consequences due to delays by the Department of Home Affairs in processing their applications.¹

The extension of the visa concession has been extended until 31 December 2024, to allow the Department of Home Affairs to address the visa application backlog.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The decision by the Minister of Home Affairs has been well received by many foreign nationals and employers, since the expiry of the previous visa concession on 30 June 2024,² created uncertainty on the legal status of the impacted foreign nationals in the country.

This extension buys some additional time for foreign nationals awaiting the outcomes of their applications and appeals, which should relieve stress and anxiety.

Temporary Extensions: More Details

Foreign nationals who have applied for waivers and their waiver applications are still pending with the Department of Home Affairs as of 30 June 2024, are granted a further temporary extension until 31 December 2024, to enable the department to process their waiver applications and for applicants to collect/receive their outcomes and submit the appropriate visa applications.

Foreign nationals who have applied for long-term visas, such as the Visitors Visa in terms of Section 11(1) (b) of the *Immigration Act of 2002*, Study Visas, Business Visas, Work Visas, Relatives Visas, and Section 11(6) Visas are granted a further temporary extension until 31 December 2024, of their current visa status.

Foreign nationals who have appealed a negative decision in relation to an application for a long-term visa have also been granted a further temporary extension until 31 December 2024.

It is imperative to note, that these applicants are not allowed to engage in any activity other than the visa conditions stipulated on their current visas.

If Abandoning the Application and Wait, Leaving South Africa

Applicants who wish to abandon their waivers, long-term visas, and appeal applications, will be allowed to exit at the port of entry on or before 31 December 2024, without being declared undesirable, and those who need to travel but are awaiting the outcome of their applications will be allowed to exit and re-enter the country without being declared undesirable. However, applicants from non-visa-exempt countries who travel out of the country are required to apply for a ‘port of entry visa,’ which will allow them to re-enter the country.

Short-term visa holders who have been issued with a visa for 90 days or less and applied for a renewal, but have not received their visa outcomes, must make the necessary arrangements to depart the country within 90 calendar days from the date of expiry of their initial entry visa, to avoid being declared undesirable upon departure from the country.

The extension of the temporary concession is only applicable to foreign nationals who have been legally admitted in the country and have submitted their applications through the Visa Facilitation Service (VFS) Global in South Africa. The applicants must produce a verifiable receipt for such application which can be verified against the VFS Global tracking system.

	Applicants who have pending waiver applications?	Applicants who have pending long-term visa applications	Applicants who have appealed a negative decision
When does the temporary visa concession extension cease to apply?	31 December 2024	31 December 2024	31 December 2024
Considerations for visa-exempt persons	To the extent that this foreign national needs to travel, he/she may depart from South Africa and will be allowed to re-enter South Africa.	To the extent that this foreign national needs to travel, he/she may depart from South Africa and will be allowed to re-enter South Africa.	To the extent that this foreign national needs to travel, he/she may depart from South Africa and will be allowed to re-enter South Africa.
Considerations for non-visa exempt persons	Foreign nationals from non-visa-exempt countries are required to apply for a port of entry visa.	Foreign nationals from non-visa-exempt countries are required to apply for a port of entry visa.	Foreign nationals from non-visa-exempt countries are required to apply for a port of entry visa.
What documentation should the foreign national have available for travelling purposes?	Original passport and original receipt of waiver application obtained from the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global.	Original passport and original receipt of long-term visa application obtained from the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global.	Original passport, original receipt of appeal application, and copy of rejection letter from the Department of Home Affairs.

KPMG INSIGHTS

The Ministry of Home Affairs has embarked on improving the country's visa application systems to help make South Africa a more attractive destination and an economic 'enabler' for international investment, tourism, and job creation.

The extension of the temporary concessions by the Minister of Home Affairs has brought some relief to many foreign nationals who could be feeling aggrieved by the delays in processing their visa applications. The Minister of Home Affairs has also committed to reinvigorating the department and to announcing further extensions prior to the expiry of the current concessions.

It is recommended that applicants and clients and their immigration counsel/advisers keep in touch as the rules are in flux – and with deadlines coming up and then passing, but temporary extensions put in place – and systems are operating slower than expected.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Home Affairs, "[New Home Affairs Minister Dr Leon Schreiber extends temporary visa concession to safeguard applicants from adverse consequences caused by processing delays](#)" (published 04 July 2024).
- 2 For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2024-028](#), 30 January 2024.

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