

25 March 2020

## Update on COVID-19 in South Africa

President Cyril Ramaphosa spoke about COVID-19 in South Africa on 15 March, and has declared a national state of disaster.

"Initially, it was people who had traveled out of the country, especially from Italy, who had positively tested for the virus. It is concerning that we are now dealing with internal transmission of the virus," the president said.

Ramaphosa was addressing the country from the Union Buildings in Pretoria on Sunday after a special Cabinet meeting to discuss matters related to the pandemic.

The following measures will be in place amongst others:

- Limited contact with persons who may be infected.
- Travel ban on foreign nationals from high-risk countries such as Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and China as from 18 March 2020.
- Visas from those countries cancelled from today and previously granted visas are now revoked.
- South Africans returning from high-risk countries will be subjected to testing and self-quarantine.
- Travelers from medium-risk countries – such as Portugal, Hong Kong and Singapore – will be required to undergo high intensity screening.
- Gatherings of more than 100 people are now prohibited.
- Schools will be closed from 18 March until after the Easter weekend.
- Visits to all correctional facilities cancelled for the next 30 days.
- All non-essential travel for all spheres of government outside of the country is prohibited.
- All non-essential domestic travel, particularly by air, rail, taxis and bus, is discouraged.
- Strengthened surveillance, screening and testing measures at OR Tambo, Cape Town and King Shaka International Airports
- 35 of the 53 land entry points will be closed, and 2 out of the 8 sea ports.

He called on everyone to change their behavior including washing their hands frequently and using hand sanitizers, covering the nose and mouth when sneezing, avoiding contact with people with flu-like symptoms and minimizing physical contact.

Cabinet is also finalizing a fiscal package to help deal with the outbreak, the president said.

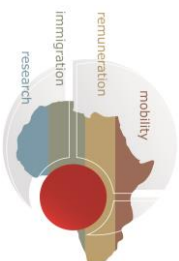
To read the President's full speech, [click here](#). The recorded address can be viewed [here](#).

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# The Big 10

## Coronavirus/Covid-19 Emergency Plan



National State of Disaster Declared



Travel ban and visa cancellations for visitors from Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, US, UK and China from March 18



Schools to be closed from Wednesday March 18 to end of Easter weekend (April 18)



Gatherings of more than 100 people prohibited



Visa denial to anyone who has visited high risk countries



Enhanced testing of SA citizens returning from high-risk countries and those who have visited since mid-February



35 land ports and 2 sea ports to be shut



Non-essential travel by all levels of government stopped



No prison visits for 30 days



Any foreign national who has visited high risk countries in past 20 days will be denied a visa

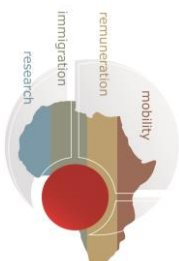
Source: GCIS/Pres Cyril Ramaphosa statement, March 15 2020, Graphic: Rudi Louw

## Lock-down

On 22 March, President Ramaphosa announced that, due to the rapidly increasing spread of COVID-19, South Africa will go into lock-down for 21 days. This will begin at midnight on Thursday 26 March, and end at midnight on Thursday 16 April.

Certain industries, such as those linked to the production and supply of essential goods, are exempt. Read the President's full speech [here](#). Furthermore, certain stores, such as drug stores, supermarkets, as well as banks, will remain open. All other businesses are to be shut down, and South Africans have been instructed to remain at home, unless they are leaving for an essential purpose, such as buying food, or seeking medical care.

South African police and military members will be on patrol to ensure the rules are adhered to, and breaking the rules may result in citizens being imprisoned. The lock-down may be South Africa's best chance to 'flatten the curve', slowing the spread of the virus.



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## **South African Immigration Foreign nationals who are currently not in SA:**

In line with President Ramaphosas' statement dated 15 March 2020 and latest instructions from the DHA, the following should be noted.

Visa exemptions granted in terms of section 10A(4)(a) of the SA Immigration Act, enjoyed by foreign nationals from the high risk countries, including China, France, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the US, and the UK, is withdrawn with immediate effect, until further notice. Foreign nationals arriving in SA after 18 March 2020, from these countries, will be refused entry.

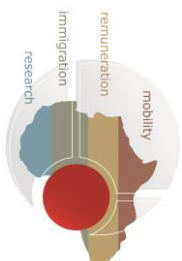
Visa exemptions granted in terms of section 10A(4)(a) of the SA Immigration Act, enjoyed by foreign nationals from the medium risk countries – Portugal, Hong Kong, and Singapore, is withdrawn with immediate effect., until further notice. Foreign nationals from these countries, must first apply for and be issued with a visa and such visa application will be subject to a medical report, attesting to the fact that the applicant has tested negative for the COVID-19.

Port of entry visas which were issued to citizens of China and Iran, on or before 15 March 2020, for the purpose of visiting SA, is cancelled with immediate effect and is declared null and void. Any foreign national whose passport contains evidence that that visited the high risk countries, since 15 March 2020, will not be issued with port of entry visas or temporary residence visas.

## **Foreign nationals who are currently in SA:**

Foreign nationals who are currently in SA and who originates from one of the countries affected by the covid-19 outbreak, or who, in order to reach their destination of origin, needs to transit through and affected country and whose temporary residence visa is due to expire, or had already expired, may apply for an extension of such visa, which extension may be granted until 31 July 2020, on condition that they are able to comply with all requirements. If one is unable to comply with one or more of the requirements, one may apply to the Minister in the prescribed manner, to waive such requirement. It should further be noted that no change of status or condition will be considered / allowed.

Foreign nationals who are currently in SA and who originates from one of the countries affected by the covid-19 outbreak, or who, in order to reach their destination of origin, needs to transit through and affected country and who is / was the holder of a temporary residence visa which expired between 1 December 2019 and 31 March 2020, may apply for an extension of such visa, without the need to first obtain a form 20 (authorization for an illegal foreigner to remain in SA pending the application for status).



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The above-mentioned concessions are only applicable to foreign nationals who have been legally admitted into SA and is applicable until further notice. For further information, please contact the [Department of Home Affairs](#), or your local embassy or consulate.

Please be aware that this information is current as at **19 March 2020**. As the virus, and public policy, is constantly evolving, the information is likely to change in future. We will endeavor to publish these changes whenever possible.

## VFS update

VFS South Africa provided us with an update in terms of their processes during the lock-down:

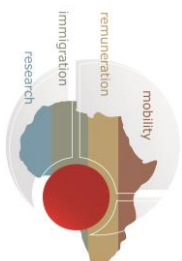
- Wednesday 25 March 2020 will be the last day of submissions – no critical skills, general work and business visa related applications will be accepted on this day for temporary residence permits only.
- Thursday 26 March will be the last day for collections, collections times 10:00 to 15:00.
- Any walk-ins that have visa's expiring tomorrow or during the lockdown will be turned away. We will prioritize scheduled appointments and appeal related applications only.
- DHA have authorized all those holding visa's expiring during the lockdown period commencing tomorrow will not require a good cause letter when we return to full operations.
- VFS reopening will be dependent on the Department of Home Affairs' decision, to be made soon. Communication will be made via all channels on complete reopening and strategy for submissions.

## At Relocation Africa

We are taking every effort to ensure the continued safety of our staff and our clients. We are monitoring the situation daily, and will react accordingly, following our contingency plans.

We have made numerous adjustments to the way we do business day-to-day, including implementing new policies around the way we receive parcels at our office, substituting meetings at the office for video calls, educating our team on how to stay safe in the workplace, purchasing disinfecting agents for our workspaces, and developing a self-isolation policy in case our staff contract COVID-19.

We are committed to following the guidelines as set out by the World Health Organization, as well as the South African Department of Health, and the broader government. We will update our clients and business partners if we make relevant changes to our operations, as necessary.



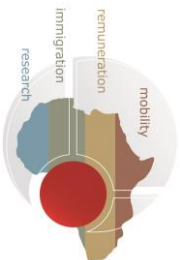
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To keep up-to-date with advice on COVID-19 from the World Health Organization, [click here](#). Stay safe. We wish you well.



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