



home affairs

Department:
Home Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

To: All Media/ News Editors

Media Statement

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FOR IMMEDIATE USE

New Home Affairs Minister Dr Leon Schreiber extends temporary visa concession to safeguard applicants from adverse consequences caused by processing delays

In his first official act as the new Minister of Home Affairs just one day after being sworn in, Dr Leon Schreiber has extended the temporary concession for foreign nationals who are currently awaiting the outcome of visa, waiver and appeal applications.

This extension safeguards applicants – including those who are contributing to South Africa through their scarce skills – from suffering adverse consequences or being erroneously declared undesirable while they await the outcome of applications submitted to the Department.

The processing of some of these applications has been delayed as the Department works on reducing backlogs. While the Department has made progress in this regard since its previous communication on the matter, there is still a backlog in various visa and permit categories and Minister Schreiber has now moved to protect applicants while the backlog is reduced.

The decision to avert adverse consequences for applicants who seek to obtain lawful visas in order to contribute to South Africa, either through their skills or as tourists, signals the Minister's commitment to improving the visa system to make South Africa a more attractive destination for international investment, tourism and job creation. While it will take time to achieve this vision in full, the decision to extend the temporary concession serves as a signal of intent to reinvigorate the Department of Home Affairs and position it as a vital economic enabler.

In order to build confidence in this new approach, Minister Schreiber further commits to avoiding a repeat of the current situation that has seen the previous concession expire prior to the extension being announced. While the Department is committed to eradicating the backlog as soon as possible, the Minister undertakes that any further extension, modification or amendment to the terms of these concessions will be communicated in writing prior to the new expiry date of 31 December 2024.

The following temporary measures will apply with immediate effect.

Applicants whose waiver application outcomes are still pending:

Visa holders who have applied for a waiver and the waiver application is still pending as at 30 June 2024, are granted a further temporary extension until 31 December 2024 to enable the Department to process the applications, for applicants to collect their outcomes, and to submit applications for appropriate visas.

Those who wish to abandon their waiver applications and depart from South Africa, will be allowed to exit at a port of entry before or on 31 December 2024 without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act, 2002 read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014.

Visa holders who need to travel, but are awaiting the outcome of a waiver application, will be allowed to exit and re-enter at a port of entry up to and including 31 December 2024, without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act, 2002 read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014. However, non-visa exempt applicants who travel out of the country with a waiver application receipt are required to apply for a port of entry visa which would allow them re-entry into South Africa.

Applicants whose visa applications are still pending:

Visa holders who have applied for long-term visas (Visitor's Visas in terms of section 11(1)(b) and 11(6) of the Immigration Act, 2002; Business Visas, Study Visas, Relative's Visas and Work Visas) and whose application is still pending as at 30 June 2024, are granted a further temporary extension until 31 December 2024 of their current visa status. Applicants are not allowed to engage in any activity other than what the visa conditions provide for.

Those who wish to abandon their visa applications will be allowed to exit at a port of entry before or on 31 December 2024 without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act, 2002 read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014.

Visa holders who need to travel, but are awaiting the outcome of a long-term visa application, will be allowed to exit and re-enter at a port of entry up to and including 31 December 2024, without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act, 2002 read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014. However, non-visa exempt applicants who travel out of the country with a long-term visa application receipt, are required to apply for a port of entry visa which would allow them re-entry into South Africa.

Applicants whose visa appeal applications are still pending:

Visa holders who have appealed a negative decision on an application for long-term visa (Visitor's Visas in terms of section 11(1)(b) and 11(6) of the Immigration Act, 2002; Business Visas, Study Visas, Relative's Visas and Work Visas) are granted a temporary extension until 31 December 2024 of the current visa status. Applicants are not allowed to engage in any activity other than what the visa conditions provide for.

Those who wish to abandon their visa appeal applications and depart from South Africa, will be allowed to exit at a port of entry before or on 31 December 2024 without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act, 2002 read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014.

Visa appeal applicants who need to travel, but are awaiting the outcome of an appeal application for a long-term visa, will be allowed to exit and re-enter at a port of entry up to and including 31 December 2024, without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act, 2002 read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014.

All appeal applicants are required to produce a copy of the rejection letter with a receipt for the appeal application on departure and re-entry into South Africa. Non-visa exempt appeal applicants who travel out of the country with an appeal application receipt, are required to apply for a port of entry visa which would allow them re-entry into South Africa.

Short term visa holders issued in terms of section 11(1)(a)

Short term visa holders issued in terms of section 11(1)(a) of the Immigration Act, 2002 for 90 days or less, who have applied for a renewal, but have not received their visa renewal outcome, must make the necessary arrangements to depart from South Africa within 90 calendar days from the date of expiry of the principal visa, to avoid being declared undesirable. The latter concession is in line with the provisions of section 11(1)(a) of the Immigration Act, 2002 which limits the duration of sojourn for visiting purposes to a total of 180 days.

The temporary concession applies only to foreign nationals who have been legally admitted into South Africa.

This concession is also only applicable to applicants who have submitted their applications via VFS Global and who can produce a verifiable receipt for such application against the VFS Global tracking system.

For enquiries on pending applications, please contact:

Nischal Jaynarayan

Tel: (012) 406-2703

Email address: Nischal.Jaynarayan@dha.gov.za

For media enquiries, please contact:

Siya Qoza

Cell number: 082 898 1657

Email address: siyabulela.qoza@dh.gov.za

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