

Immigration Law

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South Africa

- Extension of temporary concession for foreign nationals due to processing delays of visa, waiver and appeal applications



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On 30 March 2026, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) issued Immigration Directive No. 7 of 2026 (Directive), in terms of which certain temporary protections have been granted to foreign nationals with pending visa, waiver and appeal applications.

The Directive highlights that while the DHA has made significant progress in addressing the historic backlog in respect of its visa and permit applications, the DHA has also been focusing on the further development of the Electronic Travel Authorisation system (which is currently only available to a limited audience) as a means to achieve greater efficiency.

However, despite South Africa's popularity, high demand and efforts to address corruption have delayed the finalisation of some waiver, visa and appeal applications. As a result of this, the below temporary measures apply from 1 April 2026.

Applicants whose waiver application outcomes are still pending

Visa holders who have applied for a waiver and whose waiver application is pending as at 30 March 2026 have been granted a further temporary extension until 30 June 2027. The purpose of this extension is to enable the DHA to process their waiver applications, as well as to allow applicants to collect their outcomes and submit appropriate visa applications (where their waiver application is successful).

Applicants who wish to abandon their waiver applications and depart South Africa will be allowed to do so at a port of entry on or before 30 June 2027, without being declared "undesirable" in terms of section 30(1)(h) of the Immigration Act 13 of 2002 (Act), read with Regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations.



Applicants whose long-term visa applications are still pending

Visa holders who have applied for long-term visas and who are still awaiting the outcome of their applications as at 30 March 2026 have been granted a further temporary extension of their current visa status until 30 June 2027. It is important to note that such applicants may not engage in any activity other than what is provided for in their current visa conditions.

Visa holders with pending waiver or long-term visa applications who need to travel while awaiting the outcome of their applications are also allowed to depart and re-enter South Africa at a port of entry up to (and including) 30 June 2027, without being declared “undesirable”.

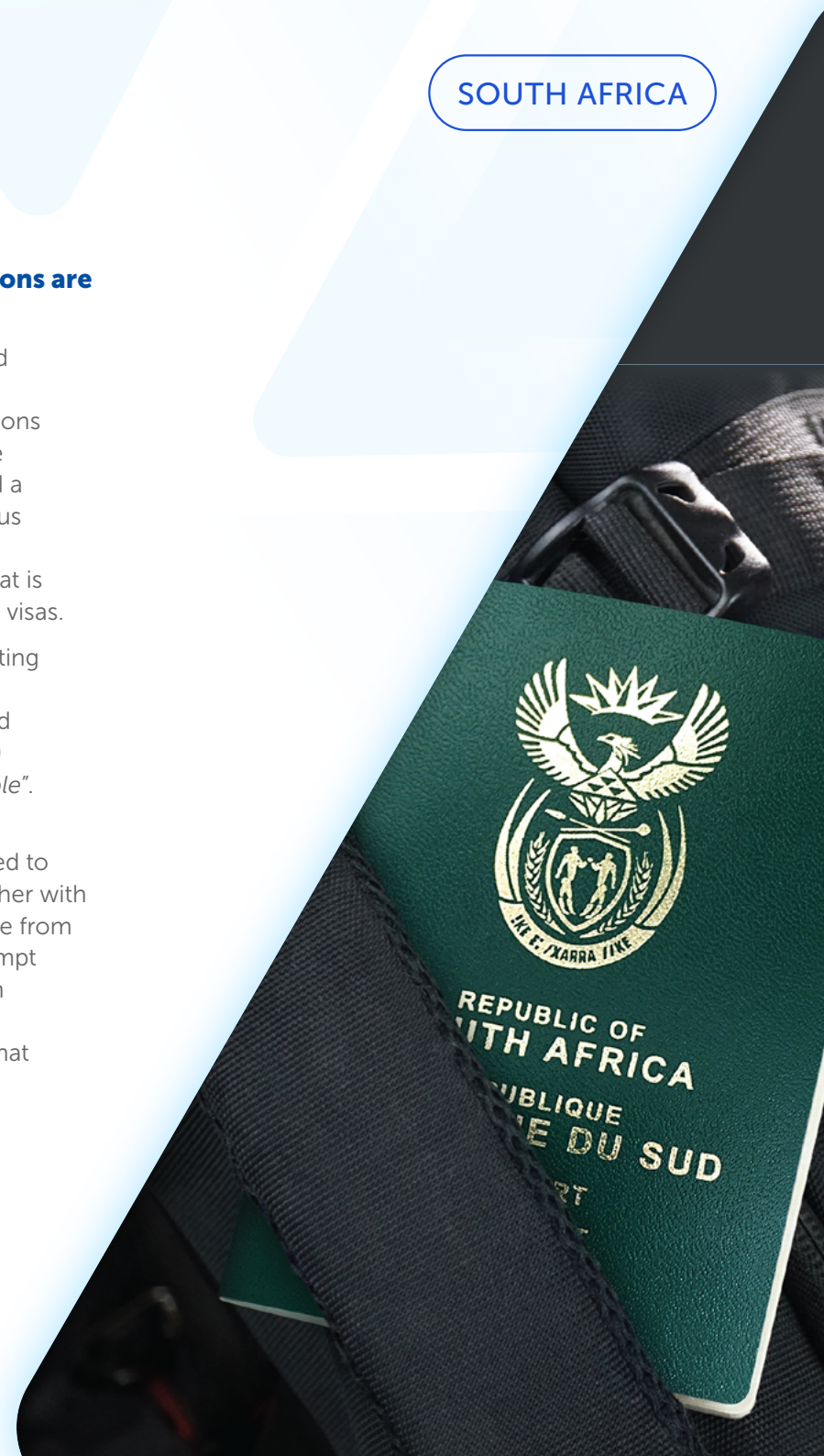
However, it is important to note that non-visa-exempt waiver or long-term visa applicants who travel out of South Africa with their waiver or long-term visa application receipts are still required to apply for a port of entry visa that would allow them to re-enter South Africa.

Applicants whose visa appeal applications are still pending

Long-term visa applicants who have appealed a negative decision on an application for a long-term visa in terms of the relevant provisions of the Act, and whose appeal applications are still pending as at 30 March 2026, are granted a temporary extension of their current visa status until 30 June 2027. However, such appellants may not engage in any activity other than what is provided for in the conditions of their current visas.

Any appellants who need to travel while awaiting the outcome of their appeal application for a long-term visa are allowed to depart from and re-enter South Africa up to (and including) 30 June 2027 without being declared “undesirable”.

It is important to note that all long-term visa appellants (regardless of category) are required to produce a copy of their rejection letter, together with proof of their appeal application, on departure from and re-entry into South Africa. Non-visa-exempt appellants who travel out of South Africa with an appeal application receipt or confirmation are required to apply for a port of entry visa that would allow them re-entry into South Africa.





Qualifications and exclusions

Importantly, the temporary concessions outlined in the Directive only apply to:

- foreigners who have been legally admitted into South Africa; and
- applicants who have submitted an application via Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global and who can produce a verifiable receipt for such application against the VFS Global tracking system.

The Directive does not apply to the following individuals:

- Applicants with pending applications for permanent residence permits. While awaiting the outcome of their applications for permanent residence, these applicants are required to ensure that their residential status in South Africa remains valid at all times.
- Applicants who have appealed the rejection of their section 11(1)(a) visitor's visa renewal applications, and whose appeals have been pending for over three months. These applicants must leave South Africa via a port of entry by 30 April 2026 and will not be declared "*undesirable*". Their appeal outcomes will then be posted on the relevant application tracking portal.

Finally, the protections afforded to foreign nationals by the concessions in the Directive cease to apply once an applicant/appellant receives the outcome of their respective application, following which, they are immediately required to comply with the conditions of these decisions.

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Our BBBEE verification is one of several components of our transformation strategy and we continue to seek ways of improving it in a meaningful manner.

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