

Global Immigration alert

January 2025



South Africa

Extension of blanket concession for individuals with pending visa, waiver and appeal applications until 31 March 2025

Executive summary

South Africa's Department of Home Affairs (DHA) recently extended the temporary concession period until 31 March 2025 for eligible foreign nationals whose Long-Term Visa, waiver or appeal applications were pending adjudication as of 18 December 2024.

Background

The DHA has been facing significant delays in processing visa applications. These delays have been attributed to several factors, including a shortage of personnel, efforts to curb corruption, a complex visa application process and travel restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to these delays, the DHA announced a concession in March 2023. This concession allowed holders of Long-Term Visas who submitted waiver or renewal applications and did not receive a decision by 31 March 2023 to receive automatic extensions of their visas until 31 December 2023. This concession was extended until 30 June 2024 and then again until 31 December 2024.

Key developments

The latest extension applies to individuals who submitted Long-Term Visa, waiver or appeal applications on or before 18 December 2024 and did not receive a decision as of that date. These individuals' lawful stay in South Africa is now valid until 31 March 2025, and they may exit and re-enter the country on or before this date without incurring penalties.

Visa-exempt individuals with pending Long-Term Visa or waiver applications must present their application receipt to immigration officials upon departure from and re-entry into South Africa. Those with pending appeal applications must present both their visa rejection letter and the appeal application receipt when entering or exiting the country. Non-visa exempt applicants with pending Long-Term Visa, appeal or waiver applications who exit the country must obtain a Visitor's Visa prior to re-entering South Africa.

In addition, individuals who hold short-term visas that were issued on or after 1 October 2024 with a validity of up to 90 days, and who applied for an extension of these visas, have been granted an automatic extension of up to 90 days until 31 March 2025 (inclusive), provided the total stay does not exceed 180 days. These individuals may exit and re-enter the country on or before this date without incurring penalties.

Impact on employers

The extension is expected to benefit employers by minimizing business disruptions in connection with processing delays.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.



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