

# Home Affairs announces visa-free status for four countries

Home Affairs Minister Aaron Motsoaledi has announced that nationals from four of the seven countries he granted visa-free status during his Budget Vote speech will be able to travel to South Africa without visas from today.



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“As from today [15 August 2019], travellers from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and New Zealand will no longer require a visa to visit South Africa for holidays, conferencing and business meeting visits.

“We took this decision unilaterally but we are engaging these countries to see how they can relax entry requirements for our citizens. I am glad to say that Qatar has already waived visa requirements for South Africans and this will enable our people to attend Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022 easier,” Motsoaledi said.

Meanwhile, the department will implement visa waivers for Ghana, Cuba and Principe and Sao Tome after negotiations with these countries have been concluded.

The department is scheduled to complete these negotiations by the end of August 2019 and the implementation will follow

soon thereafter.

Home Affairs is continuously reviewing its operations to contribute to growing the economy, facilitating the creation of jobs and securing South Africa's borders.

"The Department of Home Affairs has an important contribution to make in growing tourism and by extension, growing the economy and creating jobs.

"We are constantly reviewing our operations to ensure that we relax entry requirements without compromising our responsibility towards the safety and security of our citizens," Motsoaledi said.

Already, South Africa has waived visa requirements for 82 of the 193 countries who are members of the United Nations.

Eighteen of the countries enjoying a visa free status in South Africa are on the continent with all Southern African Development Community countries (SADC) enjoying this status, except for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

These countries which are enjoying the visa free status are among the nations which account for the majority of the international tourist sending states on the continent, Europe and the Americas.

"The department has already sent directives to ports of entry, airlines and our missions abroad informing them of the removal of visa requirements for nationals of these countries who wish to visit our beautiful country for tourism or business meetings," the Minister said.

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