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DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS : HEAD OFFICE
VISA FACILITATION CENTRES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL :
RELATIONS & COOPERATION CONSULAR SERVICES

CIRCULAR: TEMPORARY MEASURES IN RESPECT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS IN LIGHT OF A BACKLOG EXPERIENCED IN PROCESSING OUTCOMES ON WAIVER APPLICATIONS AND VISA APPLICATIONS

1. In an attempt to address the impact that the backlog in processing outcomes on waiver and visa applications has on foreign nationals, the Department has decided to introduce some temporary measures to address the situation they find themselves in.
2. The following temporary measures will apply with immediate effect:
 - a) **Applicants whose waiver application outcomes are still pending:** Long term Visa holders (Work, Business, Study, Relative and Accompany spouse) who have applied for a waiver and the waiver applications are still pending as at 31 March 2023, to be granted a temporary extension until 31 December 2023 to enable the Department to process the applications and for applicants to collect their outcomes and submit applications for appropriate visas renewals. For those who wish to abandon their waiver applications and depart from South Africa when able to do so, they should be allowed to exit at a port of entry before or on 31 December 2023 without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) the Immigration Act, read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations. Non-Visa exempted applicants are required to apply for a visitor's visa, which will allow them entry into the country.
 - b) **Applicants whose visa applications are still pending:** Long-term visa holders (Work, Business, Study, Relative and Accompany spouse) who form part of the 62692 visa backlog applications, be granted a temporary extension until 31 December 2023 of the current visa status. Applicants are not allowed to engage in any activity other than what the visa conditions provide for. For those who wish to abandon their visa applications and depart from South Africa when able to do so, they should be allowed to exit at a port of entry before or on 31 December 2023 without being declared undesirable in terms of section 30(1)(h) the Immigration Act, read with regulation 27(3) of the Immigration Regulations. Non-Visa exempted applicants who travelled out of the country with a receipt are required to apply for a visitor's visa, which will allow them entry into the country to await the outcome of their visa extension.
 - c) Short term visa holders whose visa validity was issued for less than 90 days, and have not received their visa extension outcome by 31 March 2023, must please make the necessary arrangements to depart on or before 30 April 2023, to avoid being declared undesirable.
3. The temporary measures mentioned in paragraph 2 above will apply only to foreign nationals who have been legally admitted into South Africa. This concession is only applicable to applicants who have submitted an application via VFS before or on 31st March 2023. Any further extension, modification, or amendments to the terms of these concessions will be communicated in writing.

MR L.T. MAKHODE
DIRECTOR GENERAL

DATE: 29 March 2023.