

Global Immigration: Weekly round-up of COVID-19 updates

19 April 2021

In brief

Below is a round-up of the most significant global updates on COVID-19 travel restrictions, travel corridors and quarantine measures as at 19 April 2021.

In detail

Global – Vaccination and Health Passport update

The UK announced another milestone in its vaccination rollout plan, with all adults over 45 years old in England now able to book an appointment. Similarly, this week the EU reached 100 million vaccine doses and the US confirmed that by 19 April, all adults would be eligible to access the vaccine. In contrast, over 130 countries have yet to administer a single dose of the vaccine. This inequity of access and vaccine nationalism is a growing area of international concern, given the current emphasis being placed on the relationship between vaccine passports and free movement.

Interestingly Australia's Health Minister refused to confirm that Australia's borders would reopen, even if the country's population were vaccinated. Whilst a fairly bold statement from the Australian minister, it does speak to the wider likelihood that reopening of borders will be approached cautiously considering factors beyond just vaccinations. As such, we will likely continue to see more specific bilateral travel corridor agreements being implemented. A sentiment echoed by Singapore's Health Minister a few weeks ago, suggesting that Singapore's entry restrictions would likely be specific to each implemented travel corridor and dependent upon the epidemiology of the partner country.

What this means in practice is that, for the time being, vaccines alone are unlikely to result in globally aligned, simplified approaches to travel. An ongoing need for country-specific assessments will therefore continue to be central to ensure compliance and eligibility before travel.

Americas

Argentina – Suspension of entry for non-residents extended until 30 April 2021

The government of Argentina has confirmed that the suspension of entry for non-resident foreign nationals was extended until 30 April 2021. In addition, the suspension of consular visa services has also been extended.

Citizens and foreign national residents continue to be exempt and permitted to enter the country. In addition, foreign nationals who are direct family members of Argentine nationals are exempt but must obtain pre-approval to enter via an Argentine Consulate overseas to obtain the 'Visa for Family Reunion'.

The takeaway – *South America continues to implement strict border restrictions and controls in attempts to mitigate the spread of new variants of COVID-19. Travellers who intend to travel to Argentina should check they are still eligible to do so (i.e. hold valid residence status) and ensure that they meet all pre-departure and on arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.*

Barbados – Updated entry requirements for vaccinated travellers and update to airport closure due to volcanic ash

The Barbadian authorities have updated their entry restrictions, which will take effect from 8 May 2021. Specifically, from 8 May 2021, all travellers entering the country will be required to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test result (including transit passengers). Vaccinated travellers will be required to take a COVID-19 test on arrival and, provided the test result is negative, will be able to travel within Barbados restriction free. Those who have not been vaccinated will be required to carry out a five-day quarantine, followed by a further COVID-19 PCR test on the fifth day in the country.

It should be noted that Barbados' Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) operations are currently significantly impacted by the volcanic ash connected to volcanic activity on St Vincent. GAIA is currently closed, and all flights to/from GAIA have been cancelled. As the situation with the volcano is changeable, potential ongoing disruption should be expected.

The takeaway – *The situation with the volcanic activity and ash is ongoing and likely disruption to flights in the region should be expected. With regards to the quarantine, Barbados is one of the latest countries to announce easing of quarantine measures for vaccinated travellers, provided a negative COVID-19 test result is obtained on entry. Those travelling to Barbados should ensure that they continue to meet all pre-departure and on arrival COVID-19 testing requirements, whether they are vaccinated or not.*

Peru – Extension of flight suspension

The Peruvian authorities have extended its suspension of flights from Brazil, South Africa and the UK until 30 April 2021. In addition, the national state of emergency has been extended to 30 April 2021.

The takeaway – *Travel restrictions remain in place with Peru. Travellers who are eligible and able to enter the country should ensure that they have met all pre-departure and on arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures, which includes a 14-day quarantine. Individuals in Peru should also be aware of local restrictions. All regions within Peru have been divided into a three-tier system with associated lockdown, curfew and social distancing requirements, mandated by law.*

APAC

India – Increased state-specific restrictions as COVID-19 cases continue to rise

COVID-19 infection rates continue to rise across India, a country that has reported its highest ever infection rates since the start of the pandemic. As a result, a number of states are starting to announce additional curfews and quarantine measures, often at short notice. There are also reports of state-specific additional requirements to present negative COVID-19 test results and random COVID-19 testing taking place at airports, stations and other public places.

As an example, the Maharashtra government has announced this week a 15-day curfew across the state until 1 May 2021.

The takeaway – *Individuals in India should monitor local news on state/region specific additional requirements and be prepared to be tested for COVID-19 via spot checks, when travelling domestically and in public spaces. Those travelling from overseas into India, should not only be aware of country-specific entry restrictions, but also state-specific requirements (both testing and quarantine). In addition, there are reports that visa/legalisation services in locations such as Maharashtra, will be suspended or delayed due to localised curfew and social distance requirements.*

Europe

Greece – Easing of quarantine restrictions for vaccinated travellers

Greek authorities have confirmed that from 19 April 2021, travellers from the EU, Israel, Serbia, UAE, UK and US who have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine or a negative COVID-19 PCR test result, taken within 72 hours before entry, will no longer be required to self-quarantine.

The takeaway – *Greece is another country to confirm an easing of quarantine measures for vaccinated travellers. Those intending to travel to Greece, who have been vaccinated or who have a negative COVID-19 test result, should continue to ensure they meet all other pre-departure and on-arrival requirements, including completing relevant passenger locator forms.*

Russia – Flights with Turkey restricted

From 15 April until 1 June 2021 (subject to extension) Russia will restrict the number of flights with Turkey, following reports of rising COVID-19 cases in Turkey and rising political tensions between the two countries. In addition, Russia has suspended all flights with Tanzania.

The takeaway – *Individuals who had scheduled flights from or via Turkey to or from Russia should check with their airlines as to whether alternative flight routes will be available. All eligible arrivals will continue to need to meet all pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.*

Let's talk

For a deeper discussion of how this impacts your business, please contact your Global Mobility Services engagement team or one of the following professionals:

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