



SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

Media Statement

For Distribution

SAA SUSPENDS ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS UNTIL THE END OF MAY 2020

JOHANNESBURG, 20 March 2020 –South African Airways (SAA) has announced that it will immediately suspend all international operations until 31 May 2020 in response to a government travel ban aimed at stopping the transmission of the Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The COVID-19 pandemic and attendant travel restrictions, resulted in substantial decline in demand for air travel. The situation caused many airlines across the world to ground aircraft, release their employees, and to cancel flights. In the case of SAA, this decision means that SAA will only render services on its regional and domestic routes.

Following the declaration of the State of Disaster after the outbreak of COVID-19 in South Africa, the government announced a travel ban and issued regulations, which introduced certain measures aimed at combatting the spread or transmission of the virus.

Amongst other things, the regulations, issued on Thursday state that: *“Disembarkation of foreign nationals from the high-risk countries is suspended on airports upon arrival. Embarkation and disembarkation is permissible under the following circumstances: Disembarkation of returning South African citizens and permanent residents; embarkation of departing foreign nationals, disembarkation of a declared medical emergency; foreign nationals must be approved by port health services; upon landing, crew from high risk countries shall be subject to medical screening and quarantined for 21 days”*.

SAA operates in three markets that form part of countries listed in the travel ban as high-risk areas. These are the United States (Washington DC and New York, JFK), the United Kingdom (London, Heathrow) and Germany (Frankfurt and Munich). In addition,

SAA operates flights to Australia (Perth) and Brazil (São Paulo) which have not been declared high-risk. All of which are now cancelled.

“In support of efforts by government to deal with this pandemic, and in the best interests of our crew, passengers and the public, we have decided to suspend all international and regional flights until 31 May 2020. It is all our responsibility, not just government, to curb further transmission of the virus. In addition, the increasing risks to our crew of contracting the virus including the possibility of being trapped in foreign destinations as a consequence of increasing travel bans cannot be ignored,” said SAA Acting CEO, Zuks Ramasia.

“We also recognise the fluidity in the conditions we operate in and the need to responds to these changes with speed, to this end we commit to keep all our stakeholders abreast of any changes on an ongoing basis” said Ramasia.

SAA regrets any inconvenience to our customers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and we encourage all customers to visit our website, www.flysaa.com, for further updates.

Customers are advised to either contact their travel agents, or for direct bookings, South African Airways Call Centres on +27 (0)11 978-1111 or 0861 606-606 or 0800 214-774 (South Africa only) or +27 (0)11 978-2888.

“We thank customers for their support by continuing to place their trust in South African Airways with their travel plans,” concluded Ramasia.

SAA will provide regular and timely updates through media statements, its official channels and through its travel trade partners.

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