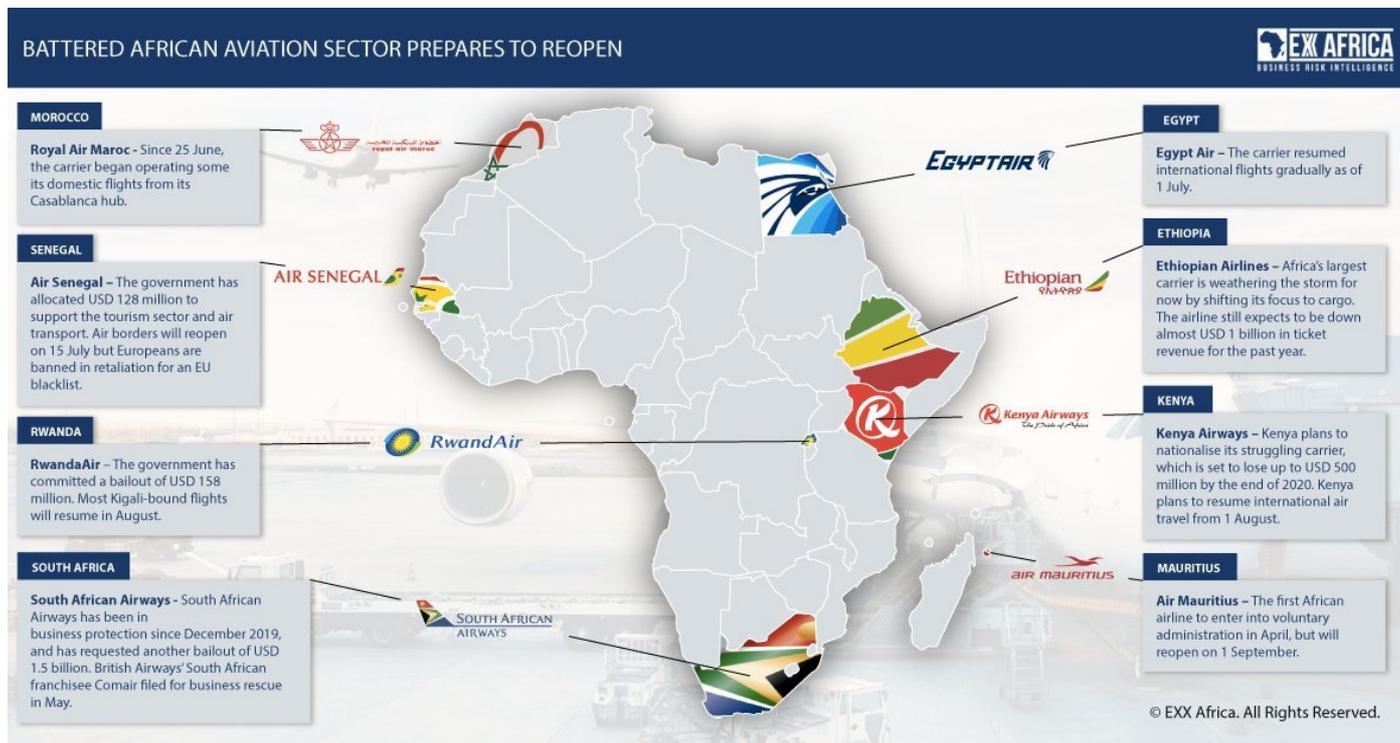**COVID-19 & AFRICAN TRAVEL:**

15 July 2020

BORDERS, RESTRICTIONS, AND SCREENING

As COVID-19 continues to take an economic toll across the continent, many African states are increasingly eyeing the re-opening of their borders as a means of bolstering tourism and business revenues. However, international travellers will now face a range of new requirements and restrictions at African ports of entry. We assess the measures in the ten largest economies.

As at 14 July, Africa had 610,807 recorded cases of COVID-19 and 13,456 related deaths, although the actual number is likely to be higher due to widespread shortfalls in testing and healthcare capacity. Nonetheless, while overall the number of cases continues to grow, the situation differs greatly from country to country. As COVID-19 infections are climbing rapidly in several states, such as in South Africa, several others appear to have the spread of the virus nominally under control. For example, Tunisia, which rapidly introduced a lock-down upon detection of its first COVID-19 cases, experienced an average of only three new cases per day over the month of June.

Given the perceived risk of importing further cases of the virus, the majority of states across the continent remain completely closed for international travel, with the exception of returning citizens and in some cases, foreign nationals with legal long-term residency. A small number of states are partially open for commercial travel, with bans or specific restrictions in place on the entry of foreign nationals travelling from countries with high numbers

of COVID-19 cases. Only Egypt, Tanzania, Liberia, Zambia, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea are completely open to all international travel with no entry restrictions for foreign nationals based on previous travel history – although health screening procedures or other general requirements may be enforced upon arrival.


BATTERED AFRICAN AVIATION SECTOR PREPARES TO REOPEN

MOROCCO
Royal Air Maroc - Since 25 June, the carrier began operating some its domestic flights from its Casablanca hub.

SENEGAL
Air Senegal – The government has allocated USD 128 million to support the tourism sector and air transport. Air borders will reopen on 15 July but Europeans are banned in retaliation for an EU blacklist.

RWANDA
RwandAir – The government has committed a bailout of USD 158 million. Most Kigali-bound flights will resume in August.

SOUTH AFRICA
South African Airways - South African Airways has been in business protection since December 2019, and has requested another bailout of USD 1.5 billion. British Airways' South African franchisee Comair filed for business rescue in May.

EGYPT
Egypt Air – The carrier resumed international flights gradually as of 1 July.

ETHIOPIA
Ethiopian Airlines – Africa's largest carrier is weathering the storm for now by shifting its focus to cargo. The airline still expects to be down almost USD 1 billion in ticket revenue for the past year.

KENYA
Kenya Airways – Kenya plans to nationalise its struggling carrier, which is set to lose up to USD 500 million by the end of 2020. Kenya plans to resume international air travel from 1 August.

MAURITIUS
Air Mauritius – The first African airline to enter into voluntary administration in April, but will reopen on 1 September.

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Below are the range of travel restrictions being implemented in Africa's ten largest economies:

Nigeria – closed until further notice

All international commercial flights remain suspended in Nigeria, except for essential and emergency flights, and the government has yet to provide a date for their resumption. However, health screening measures are already in place at all ports of entry for arriving foreign nationals. Upon reopening, government statements indicate that all visitors will be required to submit a negative COVID-19 test result dated within two weeks of departure as well as to undergo a mandatory 14-day remotely-monitored quarantine in Abuja or Lagos – at their own cost – or at their own home. They may also be tested within 72-hours of their arrival. Authorities will retain visitors' passports until the conclusion of the quarantine period, providing that they show no indications of COVID-19 infection.

South Africa – closed until further notice

All international air travel remains suspended in South Africa, except for medical emergencies and repatriation flights for South African citizens stranded abroad. Returning residents are subject to medical screening and quarantine upon arrival for 14 days in a state appointed facility. The government has given no guidelines for when international travel will resume, but private sector tourism organisations are lobbying for a re-opening by September 2020. Nonetheless, a rapid surge in COVID-19 cases and the re-implementation of several domestic restrictions on 13 July has created significant uncertainty about whether this timeline is realistic.
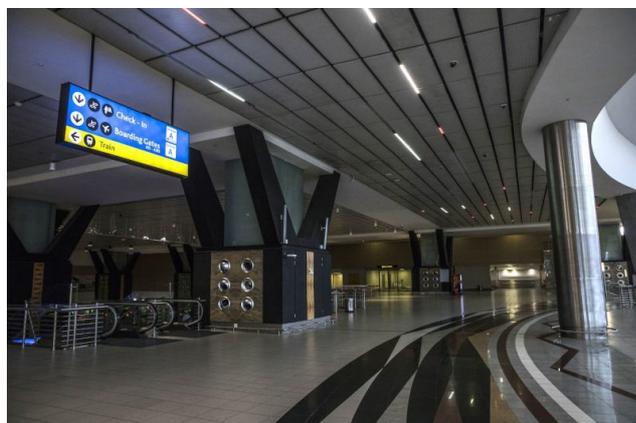
South Africa has categorised visitors' countries of origin by risk level in accordance with the prevalence of COVID-19 cases in those states. When international travel resumes, this categorisation is likely to be used to determine whether extra prevention measures are required, such as mandatory quarantine periods. It is likely that foreign nationals travelling from 'high' risk countries, such as the US, will initially remain barred from entering South Africa even as international travel from other countries resumes.

Egypt – open

Egypt has resumed limited international flights since 1 July, re-opening the country to foreign visitors. The reopening first occurred amongst specific seaside resorts in the regions of southern Sinai, Red Sea province and Marsa Matrouh on the Mediterranean, as the tourism sector remains a vital economic lifeline for the country, accounting for more than 12 percent of Egypt's GDP. International arrivals are subjected to a health screening upon arrival, including a temperature check, and are required to fill out a monitoring form with personal details. They are also required to show proof of a valid health insurance policy and must undergo a mandatory self-isolation period of at least seven following arrival.

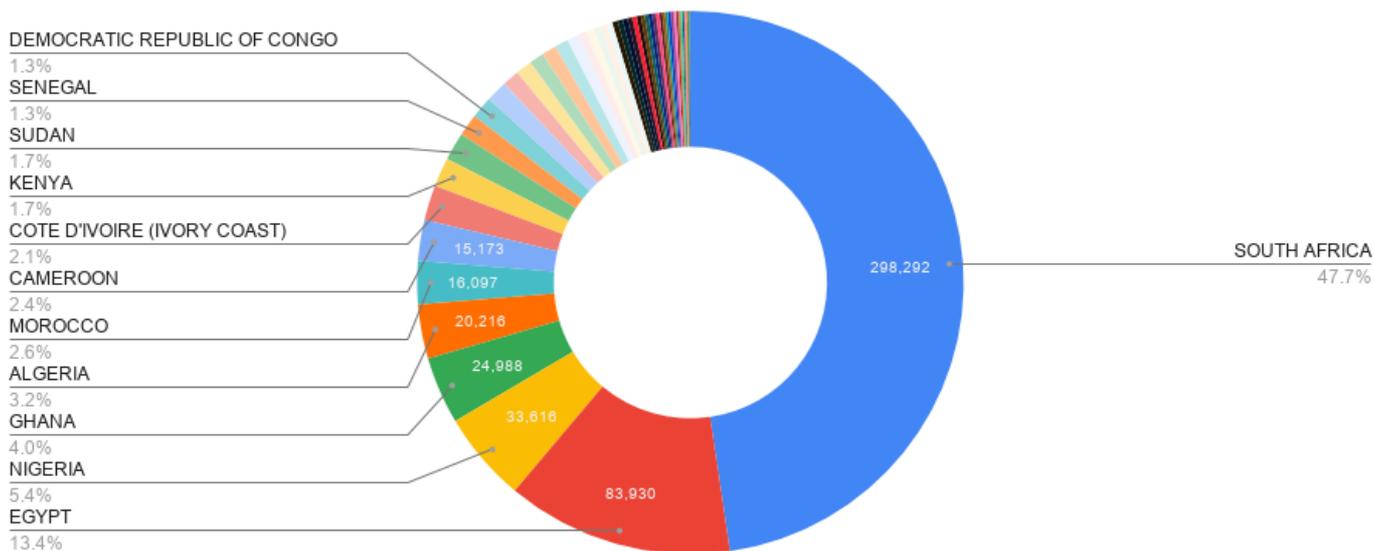**Algeria – closed until further notice**

All Algeria's borders remain closed except for returning Algerian nationals, who must undergo quarantine for 14 days. The government has given no indication of when international travel will resume. The measures used to contain COVID-19 in Algeria remain stricter than most as gatherings of more than two people have been banned in the country.

Morocco – closed until further notice

From 15 July, Morocco has allowed international commercial flights for returning Moroccan citizens as well as foreign nationals who are resident in Morocco. As of yet, no date has been announced for the full resumption of international travel, although government statements indicate that this may occur within the coming weeks. Based on current guidelines for returning citizens and residents, it seems that all international arrivals will need to present both a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test as well as a serological test for COVID-19, with the results of both dated within 48 hours prior to departure. Visitors are thereafter required to self-isolate for seven days, to download a local COVID-19 tracking app, and take another COVID-19 test after isolation. If visitors present with symptoms when they arrive in Morocco, they will have to do seven days quarantine.

Cumulative Infections Per Country
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO 1.3%
SENEGAL 1.3%
SUDAN 1.7%
KENYA 1.7%
COTE D'IVOIRE (IVORY COAST) 2.1%
CAMEROON 2.4%
MOROCCO 2.6%
ALGERIA 3.2%
GHANA 4.0%
NIGERIA 5.4%
EGYPT 13.4%

15,173
16,097
20,216
24,988
33,616
83,930

SOUTH AFRICA 47.7%
298,292

Kenya – closed until 1 August

International travel remains suspended in Kenya, excepting emergency flights, medical evacuations, humanitarian aid, and the repatriation of Kenyan citizens and legal residents. Commercial flights are scheduled to resume from 1 August 2020. COVID-19 screening procedures are to be implemented at all ports of entry, although the details thereof are still being confirmed. At present, the government has indicated that only visitors that exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will be subjected to a mandatory 14-day quarantine at a government-designated facility at the expense of the state. If there is a suspected case on the flight, passengers on the first and the second row from

where the case was will all be tested upon arrival and if tested positive, will be quarantined. There are nine government facilities and 53 participating hotels designated as quarantine facilities. Those who test positive for COVID-19 while in government quarantine will have the quarantine period extended by a further 14 days.

Angola – closed until further notice

Angola has not re-opened for international travel. Since 30 June, the government has allowed flights for humanitarian aid, medical emergencies, diplomatic travel, the return of Angolan citizens and long-term residents, as well as the repatriation of stranded foreign nationals. The government has provided no indication of when commercial flights will resume and has indicated that this decision will depend on the progression of the pandemic. All those arriving in Angola are to submit a negative COVID-19 tests taken within eight days of arrival and will undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine. It is likely that these measures will be maintained as international travel resumes.

Ethiopia - open

Ethiopia is open for international commercial air travel. There are no entry restrictions based on travellers' point of origin. Upon arrival at international airports in Ethiopia, all passengers will be subjected to a health screening, including temperature measurements and possible tracing of travel to high risk locales. All foreign nationals entering the country are required to submit a negative COVID-19 test result issued no more than 72 hours prior, and if negative must self-isolate for seven days. Visitors who do not present such a test result must, at their own expense, undergo mandatory quarantine for seven days at a state-designated facility, followed by a COVID-19 test and a further seven days quarantine in suitable accommodation of their own choosing. Travelers may choose from a range of hotels at different prices but cannot change hotel once their quarantine has started.

Ghana – closed until 31 July

In Ghana, all international travel remains suspended apart from emergency flights, medical evacuations,

and humanitarian aid flights. International commercial flights are expected to resume on 31 July. At present, all authorised arrivals are subjected to a 14-day mandatory quarantine. This measure will likely be upheld as international commercial travel resumes. Upon re-opening for international travel, Ghana is likely to utilise a risk categorisation system for travellers' countries of origin, like that employed in South Africa.

Tanzania - open

Tanzania has been partially open for international travel since 18 May, and on 1 June the Tanzanian government completely lifted all international travel restrictions. Foreign visitors are not required to go through quarantine or submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test, but medical screening of new arrivals has been implemented at all ports of entry, as well as the submission of mandatory "health forms." Only those showing symptoms of COVID-19 during the initial health screening will be required to undergo testing and quarantine unless they can provide proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test result.

INSIGHT

In the coming weeks and months, a growing number of African states are likely to further relax their COVID-19 restrictions to facilitate economic recovery, including the resumption of international travel. In many cases there appears little connection between the number of COVID-19 cases and the easing of preventative measures; countries with high or rapidly rising numbers of cases may still decide to open their borders for international travel. This is particularly likely to be the case in those countries with large developed tourism sectors. For instance, the lifting of Tanzania's travel restrictions followed from government claims that authorities have the pandemic under control, despite a public outcry from health workers that the situation is worsening. Tanzania stopped publishing data on COVID-19 after a major spike in cases in May and has since downplayed the impact of the virus throughout 2020.

Most countries are likely to implement minimum preventative measures at ports of entry, such as health screenings which include both temperature and symptom checks, as well as the submission of detailed travel information to allow authorities to evaluate individual risk based on previous travel history. Submission of proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test result is also likely to become an increasingly widespread requirement for entry, as already has been implemented in several African states. Mandatory quarantine measures also seem to be a popular choice in many Africa states; however, visitors should be warned that this may come at their own cost.

Selective entry restrictions based on visitors' country of origin are also likely to be applied in many cases, with foreign nationals travelling from countries with extremely high numbers of COVID-19 cases likely to either be denied entry or be subjected to enhanced entry criteria. However, in many countries which have a significant degree of economic reliance on their tourism sectors, such restrictions are unlikely to be implemented for a long time, or at all.

Even where countries re-open their borders, commercial carriers are likely to limit the frequency of flights to and from many African countries given both on-board COVID-19 prevention measures, which prevent planes from operating at full capacity, as well as the absence of reciprocal entry agreements with the country/region of origin. For instance, currently the EU has only allowed entry to residents from Rwanda, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. As such, international flight schedules are unlikely to return to pre-COVID levels for some time to come.

Moreover, should cases spike rapidly following the resumption of international travel, it is also likely that state borders will again be abruptly closed with little forewarning. As when the pandemic first arrived in many African states, in this scenario foreign nationals may find themselves unable to return home by ordinary means. It is therefore essential that travellers have robust contingency plans in place to prepare for such a scenario.