

SA's borders closed to Ebola-affected countries

South Africa has imposed a total travel ban for all non-citizens traveling from identified high risk countries to prevent the spread of Ebola to the country.



Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi says that travellers from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia will not be allowed to travel to South Africa and anyone wanting to visit those countries has been advised to delay the trip for the foreseeable future.
Image: GCS

Addressing media at a briefing in Pretoria, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said South African citizens who want to travel to those countries will be asked to delay their travel unless it is essential.

The high-risk countries are Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia - with Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia being identified as medium risk. He said the travel advisory was part of enhanced precautionary measures to prevent the spread of Ebola into South Africa.

"All South Africans are hereby advised to avoid non-essential travel to Liberia, Guinea or Sierra Leone. South Africans are not restricted from travelling to these countries but returning travellers will be subjected to rigorous screening and medical assessments before being allowed entry into the country," Motsoaledi said.

He said South Africans returning from these countries will be subjected to a stricter screening process including completing a comprehensive health questionnaire, body temperature screening and possibly a complete medical examination.

Designated hospitals standing by

"If anyone has symptoms or signs typical of Ebola, they will be referred to one of the designated hospitals for further investigations and management," he said.

More than 1,300 people have died from the virus in West Africa, according to the World Health Organisation. Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone have each declared the outbreak a national disaster.

African countries have been classified into three categories:

- High risk Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone;
- Medium risk including Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia;
- Low risk, where no trace of Ebola has been found but where the countries are used as transit points to get to South Africa.

"For medium and low risk countries, the normal surveillance that has been going on will just be enhanced.

"There is a special category of individuals who are South Africans but work in the mines, communications, security and retail sectors and they will be subjected to normal scrutiny procedures," said Motsoaledi.

He said Cabinet had agreed to provide funding of R32.5m to the Department of Health from the African Renaissance Fund to support containment of the disease and prevent further sit spreading.

"Part of the funds will be used to set up a mobile laboratory in Sierra Leone and send a team of health care workers to that



The Ebola virus has been declared a national disaster by some West African countries as the death toll climbs to more than 1,300 people. Image: [Thisis50](#)

country," he added.

The Minister said the department had distributed guidelines to all hospitals in public and private sectors as well as to designated health facilities for the treatment of patients. It had deployed personal protective equipment (PPE) to designated facilities and is operating a hotline for clinicians through the National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

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