



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Minister Sisulu efforts bear fruit and welcomes UAE lifts travel bans

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Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu welcomes United Arab Emirates' decision to allow South African travelers to enter their country as of today (Saturday).

This comes after Minister Sisulu held a number of meetings with the UAE's government including a member of the UAE's royal family, His Highness, Sheik Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Makhtoum, selling South Africa as a safe country to visit.

This comes after a two-month-long travel ban imposed on South Africa and its neighbouring countries following the detection of the Omicron variant.

"This is the culmination of the hard work and dedication of all tourism stakeholders. The war room that has been established has started to yield results and today we see the UAE opening their doors to our travelers. Let us continue to work hand in hand to revive our industry," Minister Sisulu said.

The UAE was one of at least 70 countries to reimpose restrictions on travelers coming from the SADC region including South Africa at the end of November which was widely criticized including by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Travelers from Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, will be permitted to enter from Saturday 29 January.

The UAE is one of South Africa's top bilateral trade partners in the Middle East, with total exports worth R25.4 billion in 2018.

"As countries begin to relax barriers of entry to and from South Africa, we expect to see increased resumption of travel which in turn will speed up the recovery of the industry," said Sisulu.

Minister Sisulu had bilateral engagements with potential investors, members of the trade that sell South Africa to the world, executives of the airlines and members of the SA Diplomatic Community during her four-day working visit to Dubai from 12 to 16 December 2021.

South Africa has a code sharing agreement with the Emirates, which gives the Airline access to South Africa's domestic routes while Emirates promotes South Africa on its Airline's Global Network. "Airlift is key pillar for South Africa's tourism recovery and therefore it is critical to collaborate with Emirates to support our turnaround strategy: said Sisulu.

His Highness, Sheik Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Makhtoum, says Emirates long-term plan is to grow the tourism business instead of being dependent on passenger transit only as previously.

Issued on behalf of Minister LN Sisulu

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