

PRESS RELEASE

GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON REPATRIATION OF BATSWANA IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES AMIDST COVID-19

GABORONE, 15th June 2020:

The Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation wishes to reiterate that the Government of Botswana remains committed to safeguarding the welfare of Batswana in foreign countries through the provision of consular services and support through the Botswana diplomatic missions. This includes facilitation of repatriation, where possible.

To date, the Ministry has facilitated the safe return of over 500 Batswana, including those who were stranded in South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and in various other countries overseas. Those facilitated from overseas, were part of the 94 nationals who recently returned home, on board a chartered Ethiopian Airline flight, on 3rd June 2020. It should be noted that the costs of the flight to Botswana were borne by the passengers.

The Ministry wishes to inform that these support services will continue to be provided through the twenty-three (23) Botswana Diplomatic Missions abroad. However, it should be noted that due to budgetary constraints it will no longer be possible for the Government of Botswana to charter any more relief flights.

Nonetheless, the Ministry will, through the Botswana Diplomatic Missions, continue to engage with other governments and airlines, and advise Batswana who wish to return home on the availability of flights coming to the region. Further information on these services can be obtained from the Botswana Missions abroad and the Department of Protocol and Consular Services at the Ministry's Headquarters.

The Ministry further wishes to encourage Batswana to always register with the nearest Botswana Diplomatic Missions whenever they travel abroad, and to ensure that travel insurance is built into the costs of their journeys.

The Public is also reminded that COVID - 19 protocols remain in effect in Botswana and neighbouring countries. Batswana traveling from or transiting through neighbouring countries are therefore required to fully comply with these measures by among others securing the relevant travel permits. Such permits should be applied for through the Botswana Diplomatic Missions in the respective country, and should be secured prior to the trip back to Botswana.

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