

# Immigration Regulatory Updates

December 2025



The December 2025 edition of the Moroom Africa Immigration Newsletter provides a curated overview of significant immigration and regulatory developments shaping mobility across Africa and beyond.

This edition examines key policy changes affecting regional movement within West Africa, developments across ECOWAS Member States, evolving United States visa and entry policies impacting African nationals, and recent immigration reforms in Southern Africa.

Together, these updates reflect shifting governmental priorities around mobility, security, digitalisation, and regulatory compliance. Our analysis now adopts a broader, Africa-wide perspective, while continuing to highlight issues of particular relevance to Nigeria where applicable.

The developments discussed are especially pertinent to Nigerian and African nationals, businesses with regional and international footprints, and individuals with foreign travel, residency, citizenship, or dual-nationality considerations.

As governments across Africa and key global jurisdictions continue to recalibrate their immigration frameworks in response to economic pressures, security concerns, and administrative reforms, staying informed remains critical for effective planning, compliance, and risk management.

## A. ECOWAS to Implement Measures to Reduce Intra-Regional Air Travel Costs

In 2024, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), through its Authority of Heads of State and Government, approved a series of measures aimed at reducing the cost of air travel within the West African region. These measures are scheduled to take effect from 1 January 2026 and are intended to address longstanding concerns around the high cost of intra-regional air travel, which has historically limited mobility, trade, and tourism within the region.

Under the Supplementary Act, Member States are required to implement a series of measures within twelve months of its entry into force. One of the most significant provisions is the abolition of four aviation-related taxes. These include the Ticket Tax, Tourism Tax, Solidarity Tax, and Foreign Travel Tax.

The removal of these levies is intended to reduce the financial burden on passengers and make air travel more affordable across the ECOWAS region.

In addition to the abolition of taxes, the Act mandates a reduction in aviation charges. Specifically, Member States must implement a 25% reduction in both the Passenger Service Charge and the Security Charge. These reductions are designed to directly lower the cost of air tickets and improve the competitiveness of regional airlines.

The Supplementary Act also establishes a framework for a regional oversight mechanism. This includes the creation of systems to monitor compliance, pricing, and performance management by providers. Furthermore, Member States are required to implement economic oversight measures to ensure that aviation charges are applied transparently, are cost-related, and do not discriminate against users.

Together, these measures aim to harmonize aviation policies across ECOWAS, reduce air travel costs, and strengthen regional integration by improving mobility and connectivity within West Africa.

If fully implemented, the new ECOWAS aviation measures are expected to significantly lower the cost of intra-West African flights, thereby making regional travel more affordable for passengers. This reduction in airfares will enhance mobility and connectivity across ECOWAS Member States, allowing people and businesses to move more freely within the region. By easing the financial burden of air travel, the initiative could also strengthen regional airlines and potentially revive interest in national carriers, many of which have struggled to remain competitive.

Beyond the aviation sector, the reforms are anticipated to boost tourism, trade, and business travel within West Africa.

More affordable flights will encourage greater cross-border interaction, stimulate economic activity, and deepen regional integration. Importantly, the initiative will reinforce the practical utility of the ECOWAS biometric card, giving more tangible meaning to the principle of free movement of persons and services across the community.

The success of this initiative, however, will depend on several critical factors. Member States must demonstrate compliance by abolishing the identified taxes and reducing charges in a timely manner.

Airlines will also need to cooperate by ensuring that the cost savings are passed on to passengers rather than absorbed internally. Finally, effective oversight will be essential. Robust monitoring by the ECOWAS Commission and national authorities will be required to enforce compliance, prevent abuse, and ensure that the intended benefits of the policy are fully realized.

## **B. Proposed U.S. Bill to Prohibit Dual Citizenship**

A United States Senator, Bernie Moreno, has introduced a legislative proposal titled the Exclusive Citizenship Act of 2025, which seeks to eliminate dual citizenship for U.S. nationals. Under the current U.S. legal framework, citizens are permitted to hold multiple nationalities without being required to renounce their original citizenship. The proposed bill argues that dual citizenship may create conflicts of interest and divided loyalties, and advocates for exclusive allegiance to the United States.

If enacted, the bill could have far-reaching implications for millions of Americans who hold dual nationality, including a significant number of Nigerians. According to data published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 38,890 Nigerians were naturalised as U.S. citizens between 2021 and 2023, ranking Nigeria 13th globally and making it the only African country among the top 20 countries of origin for new U.S. citizens during that period.

Nigerian law permits dual citizenship for citizens by birth, allowing Nigerians to acquire or retain another nationality without losing Nigerian citizenship. As a result, many Nigerian-Americans currently enjoy the legal benefits of dual nationality, including residence rights, property ownership, and ease of cross-border mobility.

At present, the bill remains a proposal and has not been enacted into law. If it advances through the legislative process, it is likely to face constitutional, political, and practical challenges, particularly given long-standing legal protections surrounding citizenship rights in the United States. Nonetheless, the proposal reflects a broader trend towards stricter nationality and allegiance requirements and warrants close monitoring by individuals and businesses with dual-nationality exposure.

### **C. Expansion of U.S. Travel Bans and Entry Restrictions**

The United States administration has announced a significant expansion of its travel bans and entry restrictions, doubling the number of countries affected by limitations on travel and immigration into the U.S. The expanded measures include both full travel bans and partial entry restrictions, applying to individuals seeking to enter the U.S. as visitors or immigrants.

Under the new proclamation, full travel bans have been imposed on citizens of additional countries, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, and Syria, as well as individuals travelling on documents issued by the Palestinian Authority. In addition, nationals of 15 countries—including Nigeria, Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—have been subjected to partial travel restrictions.

While certain categories of travellers remain exempt, including lawful permanent residents, existing visa holders, diplomats, athletes, and individuals whose entry is deemed to serve U.S. national interests, the measures introduce heightened scrutiny and additional compliance hurdles. The administration cited concerns relating to unreliable civil documentation, visa overstay rates, limited cooperation on deportations, and broader national security considerations as justification for the expanded restrictions.

For Nigerian nationals, inclusion on the partial restriction list may result in longer visa processing timelines, increased documentation requirements, and a higher likelihood of administrative delays or refusals. Businesses, students, and frequent travellers may need to reassess travel planning and immigration strategies in light of the evolving U.S. entry landscape.

## **D. South Africa – Digital Citizenship Reinstatement and Visa System Reforms**

South Africa has introduced two notable immigration reforms aimed at enhancing efficiency, transparency, and digitalisation within its immigration framework.

### **Launch of Citizenship Reinstatement Portal**

With effect from 24 November 2025, South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs announced the launch of the Citizenship Reinstatement Portal, a fully digital platform designed to support South Africans abroad whose citizenship status may have been affected by prior legislative provisions.

The portal enables applicants to securely authenticate their identity, verify citizenship status using national identification records, and track applications in real time.

Where citizenship remains valid, confirmation is issued immediately. In cases where citizenship was previously lost under Section 6(1)(a) of the South African Citizenship Act, the platform guides applicants through a simplified reinstatement process. This development represents a major step towards improving access to citizenship services for South Africans in the diaspora and reflects the government's broader commitment to digital public service delivery.

### **Implementation of Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) System**

In addition, South Africa has commenced the rollout of its Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system, marking a transition from traditional paper-based visa processing to a fully digital immigration model. The ETA platform enables online visa applications, biometric capture, and rapid decision-making, while integrating with the country's Electronic Movement Control System to support automated border entry through facial recognition technology.

The system was initially deployed for G20 delegates, with subsequent phases extending access to nationals of G20 countries applying for tourist visas. Once fully implemented, the ETA system is expected to cover all visa categories and all foreign nationals requiring visas to enter South Africa. These reforms are expected to significantly streamline visa processing, improve border security, and reduce administrative bottlenecks for travellers and businesses.

Should you require further assistance or clarification on any of the above, please feel free to contact [pamilerin.akabunwa@moroomafrica.com](mailto:pamilerin.akabunwa@moroomafrica.com).

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