

Immigration Regulatory Updates

March 2026

In this month's edition of the Moroom Africa Immigration Update, we examine key developments influencing immigration enforcement, regional mobility, and international travel. These updates reflect a growing balance between stricter border control measures and increased efforts to promote ease of movement across Africa and beyond.

Nigeria Strengthens Visa Overstay Enforcement

The Federal Government of Nigeria has significantly enhanced its immigration enforcement framework through the establishment of an Integrated Operations Centre and a Network Operations Centre managed by the Nigeria Immigration Service. This development enables authorities to monitor and track the movement of foreign nationals who have entered the country over the past decade.

With access to comprehensive entry and exit data, the government can now identify individuals who have exceeded their authorised stay in Nigeria. Enforcement actions, being a penalty of \$15 per day of overstay have commenced. This marks a major shift toward stricter compliance and signals Nigeria's commitment to strengthening border security and aligning with global immigration monitoring standards.

Seychelles Introduces Visa-Free Entry for All African Nationals

Seychelles has taken a significant step toward promoting regional mobility by granting visa-free access to all African passport holders. This means that Africans can now travel to Seychelles without the need to obtain a visa prior to arrival.

Despite this relaxed entry policy, travellers are still required to meet certain conditions. They must possess a valid passport for the duration of their stay, provide evidence of a return or onward ticket, and demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to support themselves while in the country.

This policy not only simplifies travel but also positions Seychelles as a more accessible destination for tourism and business within Africa.

Nigeria and United Kingdom Sign Landmark Migration Agreements

The governments of Nigeria and the United Kingdom have entered into a series of landmark agreements aimed at strengthening cooperation in migration management, border security, and economic development.

These agreements include a Memorandum of Understanding on Migration Partnership, as well as Statements of Intent addressing organised immigration crime and the expansion of business visa pathways. Collectively, they are designed to improve the management of migration flows, combat illegal immigration activities, and facilitate legitimate travel for business purposes.

Importantly, the expansion of business visa access is expected to boost trade and investment by making it easier for UK companies to operate in Nigeria. The agreements also reflect a shared commitment by both countries to create a migration system that is secure, transparent, and mutually beneficial.

United Kingdom Announces Increase in Visa and Immigration Fees

The United Kingdom has announced a wide-ranging increase in visa and immigration fees, set to take effect from 8 April 2026. The revised fee structure will affect multiple categories of applicants, including visitors, students, skilled workers, and individuals seeking permanent residence or British citizenship.

Under the new regime, the cost of a short-term visitor visa (valid for up to six months) will increase from £127 to £135. Longer-term visit visas have also been adjusted, with the two-year visa rising from £475 to £506, the five-year visa from £848 to £903, and the ten-year visa from £1,059 to £1,128. These increases, though relatively modest individually, will impact a large number of travellers who visit the UK for tourism, business, or family purposes.

Student visa applicants will also face higher costs, with the standard application fee increasing from £524 to £558.

Similarly, skilled worker visa fees are set to rise, with applications for stays of up to three years increasing from £769 to £819, and those exceeding three years rising from £1,519 to £1,618. These changes apply to both in-country and overseas applicants.

More significant increases are evident in settlement-related applications. The fee for Indefinite Leave to Remain will increase from £3,029 to £3,226, reflecting a substantial cost for individuals seeking permanent residency in the UK. In addition, the cost of naturalisation as a British citizen will rise from £1,605 to £1,709, while adult registration fees will increase to £1,540.

The Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), which applies to visa-exempt travellers, will also see its fee increase to £20, continuing a steady upward trend since its introduction. However, in a notable exception, the fee for registering a child as a British citizen will be reduced from £1,214 to £1,000, offering some financial relief to families.

Overall, these adjustments reflect the UK government's continued policy of increasing immigration-related charges as part of its cost-recovery strategy. Given the high volume of applications from Nigerian nationals, these changes are expected to have a significant practical impact on individuals seeking to travel, study, work, or settle in the United Kingdom.

Rwanda Expands Visa-Free Travel for African Union Citizens

Rwanda has expanded its visa policy by granting visa-free entry to citizens of all member states of the African Union. Under this new arrangement, African travellers can enter Rwanda without a visa and remain in the country for up to 30 days.

This policy is part of Rwanda's broader strategy to promote tourism, encourage regional integration, and position itself as a key travel destination within Africa. The country has already gained international recognition for its eco-tourism offerings, including wildlife experiences and conservation-driven travel.

By removing visa barriers, Rwanda is making it easier for Africans to explore the country and participate in regional economic activities. This move also aligns with continental efforts to enhance free movement and strengthen intra-African connectivity.

Uganda Expands Visa-Free Access to Selected Countries

Uganda has introduced visa-free entry for nationals of 40 countries as part of its efforts to promote tourism, business travel, and regional cooperation. Travellers from eligible countries can now enter Uganda without a visa and stay for up to 90 days.

While the policy includes several African countries, it notably excludes major nations such as Nigeria and South Africa. This highlights the ongoing challenges associated with achieving full travel integration across the continent.

Although the initiative represents progress, it also underscores the fragmented nature of Africa's immigration systems, where visa policies continue to vary significantly between countries despite broader aspirations for unity and free movement.

South Africa Introduces Temporary Visa Relief Measures

South Africa has introduced temporary immigration relief measures to support travellers affected by airspace disruptions in parts of the Middle East. These disruptions have prevented many individuals from leaving the country before their visas expire.

In response, the government has implemented concessions that allow affected individuals to extend their stay, apply for changes in visa status, and avoid penalties associated with overstaying. Certain administrative requirements have also been relaxed to ease the application process.

These measures are temporary and will remain in effect until 31 May 2026 or until normal travel conditions are restored. The initiative reflects a flexible and humanitarian approach to immigration management in response to unforeseen global events.

Conclusion

This month's developments illustrate a rapidly evolving immigration landscape shaped by both control and cooperation. While countries such as Nigeria and the United Kingdom are strengthening enforcement mechanisms and increasing regulatory costs, others like Seychelles and Rwanda are prioritising accessibility and regional mobility.

At the same time, temporary measures such as those introduced by South Africa demonstrate the need for adaptability in response to global disruptions. Overall, the global immigration framework continues to evolve, balancing national security interests with the growing demand for easier cross-border movement.

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

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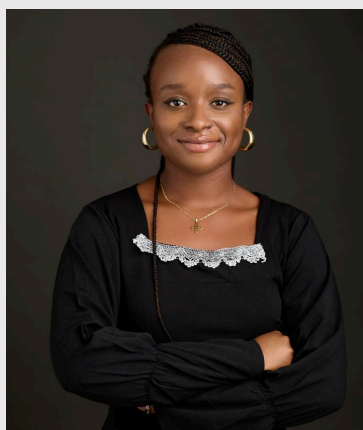
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