

Immigration Regulatory Updates

April 2026

In this April 2026 edition of the Moroom Africa Immigration Update, we highlight two significant policy shifts shaping cross-border mobility between Africa, the Middle East, and West Africa. These updates reflect a continued global focus on security-driven screening, digitisation of immigration processes, and facilitation of legitimate travel for business and investment.

UAE Introduces Mandatory Police Clearance for Selected Nationalities

The United Arab Emirates has introduced a new compliance requirement affecting new visa applications from selected nationalities. Under the updated policy, applicants from **Egypt, Algeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Iraq, Nepal, Afghanistan, Mexico, Bulgaria, Bhutan, Cuba, Sri Lanka, and Ethiopia** must now submit a **Good Conduct Certificate (Police Clearance Certificate)** as part of their visa application.

Key Compliance Notes

- The requirement applies **only to new visa applications**.
- Applications submitted without the Police Clearance Certificate may face **processing delays or rejection**.

How to Obtain the Certificate

- **Applicants outside the UAE:** The Police Clearance Certificate must be obtained from the applicant's country of residence and **attested by the UAE Embassy**.
- **Applicants inside the UAE (with cancelled visas):** The certificate must be issued through **UAE Police authorities**.

This policy underscores the UAE's increasing emphasis on pre-entry background checks as part of its broader immigration risk management strategy.

Ghana Approves New E-Visa Policy to Boost Business and Tourism

Ghana's Cabinet has approved a new E-Visa policy scheduled to rollout in May 2026, marking a major transition to a fully digitised, pre-arrival travel authorisation system for business and tourism travellers.

How the Ghana E-Visa Works

- 1. Online application:** Applicants submit forms, upload documents, and make payments via an official government portal.
- 2. Digital vetting:** Applications are reviewed by the Ghana Immigration Service using biometric verification and security watchlists.
- 3. Electronic issuance:** Approved visas are delivered by email with a QR code, reducing processing times to **24–72 hours**.
- 4. Arrival verification:** QR codes and biometric data are scanned at ports of entry to confirm identity and admission.

The system aligns with ICAO digital travel standards and replaces manual, paper-based visa processing.

Business and Investment Implications for Ghana

The E-Visa regime is expected to significantly improve Ghana's attractiveness as a business and investment destination:

- **Faster market entry** for investors, executives, and technical specialists
- **Stronger diaspora engagement** to stimulate enterprise-focused investments
- **Improved MICE and tourism competitiveness** for conferences and regional events

- **Operational efficiency at borders**, allowing immigration officials to focus on security
- **Reduced logistics delays** for project-based industries such as oil & gas, construction, and manufacturing

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has described the policy as part of Ghana's broader agenda to modernise travel, strengthen security, and reinforce the message that **"Ghana is open for business."**

Nigeria Introduces Airport Biometric E-Gate System and Passport Update

Biometric Entry System at Local Airports

The Federal Government of Nigeria has signed an agreement to deploy the VPass E-Gate System across all FAAN-managed local airports. This marks a major transition from manual passenger checks to a fully digitised biometric screening framework.

Under the new system:

- Travellers will no longer need to present physical documents at airport entry points
- Facial recognition technology will verify passenger identity in real time
- Airport access processes will become seamless and contactless

Expected Impact

- Significant reduction in queues and processing delays
- Strengthened aviation security architecture
- Improved passenger facilitation and travel experience
- Enhanced operational efficiency and potential revenue optimisation

This initiative reflects Nigeria's accelerating adoption of biometric border management systems aligned with global aviation standards.

Nigerian Passport Ranking and Visa Access Trends

According to the April 2026 Henley Passport Index:

- Nigeria's global passport ranking improved from 95th (January 2024) to 89th (April 2026)
- However, visa-free access declined from 46 destinations (2025) to 44 destinations (2026)

Key Mobility Developments

Gains in access:

- Fiji, Micronesia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Togo, Samoa, Palau, Niue, and Montserrat

Loss of visa-free or visa-on-arrival access:

- Zambia (visa now required)
- Zimbabwe (prior visa required)
- Lesotho, Mauritania, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia

Notable policy update:

- Ethiopia has restored visa-on-arrival access for Nigerian travellers following diplomatic engagement, reversing previous restrictions

Regional Comparison (Africa)

Within Africa, Nigeria remains relatively lower in mobility rankings when compared with:

- Ghana

- Senegal
- Côte d'Ivoire
- The Gambia

South Africa continues to lead the continent in passport strength, with significantly broader visa-free access.

Conclusion

April's developments highlight tighter pre-entry screening in high-traffic destinations such as the UAE, accelerated digital facilitation of business travel in reform-oriented economies like Ghana, and the increasing adoption of biometric border management systems in key African markets such as Nigeria. Organisations and travellers are advised to closely review new documentation requirements, prepare for evolving identity verification systems, and leverage digitised visa and entry processes to avoid disruption, delays, or compliance risks.

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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