



## REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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### CIRCULAR

**TO** : ALL HEADS OF MISSION

**FROM** : ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 

**DATE** : 31 December 2020

**SUBJECT** : **REPATRIATION OF HUMAN REMAINS INTO NAMIBIA  
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**This Circular serves to forward herewith information received from the Ministry of Health and Social Services regarding the above mentioned subject for urgent consideration and dissemination:**

1. The Ministry of Health and Social Services observed with great concern families turning up at the Ports of Entry with the remains of their loved ones without prior approval from the Ministry of Health and Social Services.
2. This letter serves to bring to the attention of all Diplomatic Missions that human remains should be presented at the borders with a valid negative SARS-COV-2 PCR test result that is certified in the country of issue of such test results. Provisions of regulations (20) of the Public and Environmental Act of 2015 related to removal and burial of human remains of a person who have died of infectious disease should strictly be adhered to prevent the spread of the disease.
3. Family members who want to repatriate Human Remains must seek prior approval from the Regional Directors concerned before doing so. The request must be submitted with the following documentation:
  - a. Proof of Namibian citizenship.
  - b. A death certificate written in English, clearly stating the cause of death.
  - c. Name, address and telephone contact of Funeral undertaker who will receive the human remains on the Namibian side.
  - d. Registration number, make and type of the vehicle involved in the repatriation should be provided before departure from the place of death.
  - e. The place and date of the burial.

4. Request for repatriation of human remains is better coordinated with the support of the Namibia Mission or Representative in the Foreign country where feasible.
5. All persons (funeral undertakers and family members) who are accompanying the body across borders should adhere to the following requirements:
  - a) As per the regulations, persons allowed entry into Namibia should present to an authorized person a **negative SARS-COV-2 PCR test result** issued by an authorised laboratory that is certified in the country of issue. If the SARS-CoV-2 PCR test results:
    - i) Is not older than 72 hours, the traveler will not be subjected to mandatory quarantine. However, traveler must adhere to all infection prevention and control measures.
    - ii) Is older than 72 hours but not older than 7 days, the traveler will be subjected to supervised quarantine at home or a tourism facility approved by the authorised person as per the regulations. If the places referred to above does not meet the quarantine requirements, traveler will be quarantined at a designated quarantine facility for a period of 7 days at own cost.
  - b) Must adhere to all public health measures on the use of masks, social distancing, hand washing and sanitizing, and attendance of gatherings at all times.
6. If the deceased was not tested for COVID-19 prior to death, the body must be swabbed for SARS-CoV-2 testing and results should be submitted.
7. If the body has been embalmed, the **embalment certificate** should be submitted. Swabbing for COVID-19 testing is not required for a body that is already embalmed.
8. The Namibian Public and Environmental Health Act, 2015 prohibits importation of human remains of persons who died of infectious diseases, such as, COVID-19.
9. All repatriated human remains must be properly packaged in **sealable bags** before placed in a coffin or use an **Aluminium leak-proof coffin**.
10. In the event of cremated remains, there is no risk of disease transmission with ashes. Hence no public health requirements for repatriation of ashes, nor prior approval is needed from the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

It will be highly appreciated if Mission could familiarize themselves with the Regulations during COVID-19 and aftermath.

Your cooperation in this regard will be appreciated.