

# Help, my residence visa got cancelled and I can't exit



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LEGAL VIEW

**Q** My UAE residence visa expired on March 6 and my employer has already cancelled it. I am currently serving my one month notice period and I have until April 5 to depart from the UAE. The return flight to my home country was scheduled to depart on April 3. However, due to coronavirus pandemic, all flights have now been cancelled. I don't know when I shall be able to return to my home country. Will overstay fines be imposed on me? Should I apply for a visit visa in the intervening period of time?

**A** It may be noted that an employee whose residence visa has been revoked must exit the UAE. This is in accordance with Article 19 of the Federal Law No. (6) for 1973 concerning immigration and residence as amended by virtue of Law No. (7) of 1985, Law No. (13) of 1996 and Federal Decree Law No. (17) of 2017 (the 'Federal Residency Law'), which states: "Article 19:

Foreigners who have obtained residence licence shall be subject to the provisions of Article (11) herein. They must leave the country upon the revocation of their residence permit or the expiration of its term."

In furtherance, it may be pertinent to note that upon the cancellation of a residence visa, the UAE residence visa-holder may continue to stay in the UAE for a maximum period of 30 days as a grace period from the day of its cancellation. Under normal circumstances, staying beyond the grace period shall attract a penalty for the UAE residence visa-holder. However, taking into account the recent measures implemented by the UAE leadership to keep us all safe and contain Covid-19, permission may be granted by the authority concerned on a case to case basis that may allow an individual to continue staying legitimately within the UAE beyond the grace period.

Considering that you are unable to leave the UAE due to the closure of air space and land borders and cancellation of passenger

## Know the law

Taking into account the recent measures implemented by the UAE leadership to keep us all safe and contain Covid-19, permission may be granted by the authority concerned on a case to case basis that may allow an individual to continue staying legitimately within the UAE beyond the 30-day grace period after visa cancellation

flights, you may apply for a visit visa as the UAE government has already announced its support by considering all such cases on humanitarian grounds.

You may approach the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs (GDRFA) for further queries and seek guidance.

## E-service will help expats return to UAE during emergencies

**Q** I am an expatriate from the Philippines residing in the emirate of Dubai. My girlfriend had travelled to the Philippines and is currently unable to return to Dubai because of the recent cancellation of flights. How can my girlfriend return here?

**A** Across the globe, governments and people are experiencing testing times while trying to fight and contain the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. The UAE's leadership continues to make intense efforts and take various steps to protect and safeguard the health of all the people living in the UAE. The UAE has taken immediate precautionary and preventive measures to limit the spread of Covid-19 in the country to ultimately eliminate it. Considering the measures being implemented and the precautions being taken to keep us all safe from the coronavirus, it is our utmost duty to comply with the directives and instructions that are being issued by the UAE leadership.

In furtherance, it may be noted that the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority and the General Civil Aviation Authority on March 23

decided to suspend all inbound and outbound passenger flights and the transit of passengers in the UAE for a duration of two weeks as part of the precautionary measures to combat the pandemic. In accordance with the aforesaid directive, your girlfriend may have to continue staying in the Philippines until the resumption of passenger flights. However, if your girlfriend holds a valid UAE residence visa, she may register with the 'Twajudi Resident' service on the website of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and contact them on their helpline: 00971-249-65228 or 00971-920-83344 for further assistance. This service is primarily to assist UAE residents who have an emergency and an urgent need to return to the UAE.

In accordance with the message of Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Dubai Executive Council: "Remember that we are only as strong as our weakest link. We're here for you, and trust that we can count on your commitment to act responsibly.#STAYHOME", all people in the UAE must remain at home and fully follow and abide by the directives and instructions of the UAE's leadership, who are striving hard to keep us all safe. Wash your hands regularly, maintain physical distancing, personal hygiene and if unwell, immediately report by contacting the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention on their toll-free number: 800-11111.

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