



10 December 2021

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0648

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to when very high risk countries will be reviewed

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 16 November 2021. You requested:

I would like to know when the govt / Ministry of health is to going to re-review the "high-risk countries" list as I understand this was reviewed in April 2021 and there are changes happened in the listed high risk countries and also in NZ.

A review of the country risk classification was provided to the Minister for COVID-19 Response, Hon Chris Hipkins, for consideration on 16 August 2021, though a decision regarding a change in risk designation for these countries was delayed due to the Delta outbreak on 17 August 2021. An updated review of the country risk classification was provided to Minister Hipkins on 27 October 2021.

On 24 November 2021, the Government announced changes to the classification of some very high-risk countries (VHRs) that saw Indonesia, Fiji, India, Pakistan, and Brazil removed from the VHR list. Papua New Guinea will continue to be classified as a VHR country. With the outbreak of the new Omicron variant, a small number of Southern African countries have recently been added to the VHR list.

Travellers to New Zealand from VHR countries are temporarily restricted to:

- New Zealand citizens,
- Partners and dependent children of New Zealand citizens, or
- Parents of dependent children who are New Zealand citizens, together with any children of those parents who are not New Zealand citizens.

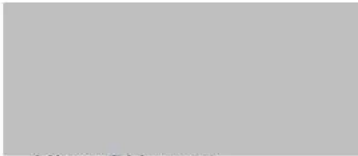
All other travellers, including people holding residence class visas, must spend at least 14 days outside of VHR countries before flying to New Zealand.

The country risk assessments for VHR countries and jurisdictions have now been proactively released on the Unite against COVID-19 website (covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/proactive-releases/), under the *Border* tab.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Barnes
Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19 Response