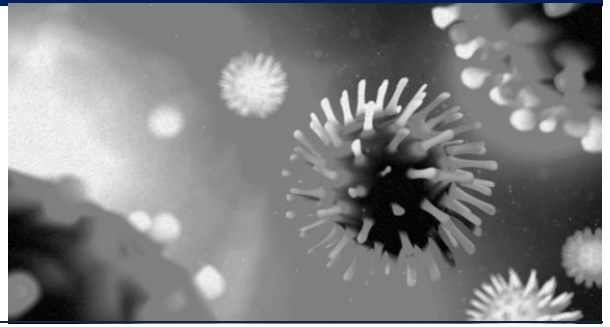# Legal Alert

COVID-19: Entry into the Emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi
By Charles Laubach, Abdus Samad and Dimple Soni | 14 September 2020

On 12 September 2020, the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention (**MoHAP**) reported 1007 new COVID-19 cases in the UAE. With the number of cases rising both within the UAE and in most other countries, the UAE government has reiterated the importance of adhering to preventive guidelines and has further placed safeguards, particularly in Abu Dhabi, to ensure that those traveling to the UAE are confined to prevent the transmission of the virus.

Currently, individuals traveling to Abu Dhabi from outside the UAE must first update the details of their visas on the website of Federal Authority of Identity and Citizenship (**ICA**) and confirm their entry to the UAE. (The same is true of passengers arriving in the UAE via airports other than those in Dubai). An instant response message from the ICA with a "green status" indicates that the entry has been confirmed by the ICA. A message with a "red status" indicates that the request to enter the UAE has been rejected and the applicant must wait for a few days to re-apply. Travelers who are not UAE nationals or holders of UAE residence visas are not permitted to enter. Following receipt of the "green status" message, the traveler can proceed to book a flight and comply with any additional requirements of the airline. Most important, a negative COVID-19 PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test result must be provided at the airport and must not have been taken more than 96 hours prior to departure. The test result must be printed and be either in English or Arabic. The test must be conducted at a UAE government approved testing center.

Upon arrival at Abu Dhabi airport, travelers will be tested again for COVID-19. Unlike in Dubai, passengers arriving from certain jurisdictions (no published list is as yet available) are made subject to a mandatory institutional quarantine of 14 days (irrespective of the test results, whether positive or negative) at a government facility. The traveler is also mandated to wear a tracker provided by the health officials. After 12 days of the 14-day quarantine, travelers are required to re-test themselves and with the confirmation of a negative test result (usually received by message) they are permitted to return the tracker and formally end the quarantine. Additionally, upon entry, travelers are required to sign an undertaking at Abu Dhabi airport to comply with the rules and guidelines of the UAE authorities and also to install the **AlHosn App** to assist the authorities in contact tracing.

Last month, the Dubai government announced that travelers by air to Dubai are required to first obtain approval online from the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs in Dubai (**GDRFA**). Travelers (those having a Dubai residence visa) must now apply for the approval via the new smart platform of GDRFA Dubai on https://smart.gdrfad.gov.ae/ and provide the details of their visas. Travelers must submit to the airline and the airport a printed negative COVID-19 PCR test result in English or Arabic which again must not have been taken more than 96 hours prior to departure. Upon arrival, travelers will be tested again at the Dubai airports. Post-arrival, a home-quarantine is mandatory in Dubai until the results of the PCR test are obtained, if negative. However, a traveler who tests positive must self-quarantine for 14 days from the time of arrival in Dubai. Similar to Abu Dhabi, a signed undertaking and a declaration to abide by the rules and install the **DXB Smart App**, a contact tracing app, must be submitted at the time of arrival at Dubai airports. Unlike Abu Dhabi, foreigners without UAE residence visas may enter the UAE via Dubai's airports.

Within the UAE, those traveling into Abu Dhabi from any other Emirate must also provide a negative PCR test result <u>or</u> a negative DPI test (Diffractive Phase Interferometry) both conducted no earlier than 48 hours prior to their entry into Abu Dhabi. Individuals who will then stay in Abu Dhabi for six consecutive days or more must also take a PCR test on the sixth day of each visit to the Emirate.

The UAE government has further reiterated that failing to comply with the rules and guidelines shall attract heavy fines and can also lead to criminal prosecution if the offense is repeated. ∎

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Please note that new rules and developments are occurring in the UAE on a very frequent basis. These are subject to change without prior notice or formal/public announcement.

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