04 March 2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Volunteer Travel

The World Health Organisation (WHO) advises against the application of any travel or trade restrictions on countries with COVID-19, however, local authorities may implement travel restrictions and health screening measures for travelers entering or exiting the country.

All UN Volunteers who are due to travel to their assignment or travel home for repatriation are responsible to check with the destination countries’ (and any transit country’s) embassy, consulate or ministry of health before purchasing their flight tickets and keep up to date with local health advice before and during travel. UN Volunteers should also comply with any screening measures put in place by local authorities.

For reference, the International Air Transport Association has compiled a list of current travel restrictions. This information is only as reported to IATA by the countries and may not reflect the latest information or provide all specific details (e.g. the US restrictions lists by IATA do not go into the level of details shared by the State department in terms of visas that are exempt).

IATA list of current travel restrictions

Candidates are advised to request their security clearance in TRIP based on travel itinerary and purchase ticket only once the security clearance is granted by UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

Please familiarise yourself with the following information and continue to keep yourself up to date on latest developments.

Travel advisory from World Health Organization (WHO) about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Travel Health Information for UN Personnel

Medical Coverage for Serving UN Volunteers

Frequently asked questions provided by Cigna on the novel coronavirus and insurance coverage

Descriptions of medical insurance coverage:

For international UN Volunteers: English, Spanish, French, Russian

For national UN Volunteers: English, Spanish, French, Russian

Further information and training on COVID-19

World Health Organisation - Novel Coronavirus situation reports

Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health Novel Coronavirus webpage

Online training provided by WHO
COVID-19 MEDEVAC Protocols for WHO, UN and frontline workers

Frequently asked questions for candidates and serving UN Volunteers relating to COVID-19

1. What arrangements are available to UN Volunteers for telecommuting?

Telecommuting arrangements shall be in line with UN Host Entity flexible working arrangements as per the international UN Volunteer Conditions of Service section 3.2.

2. What happens if travel restrictions change while I am travelling?

Airline companies are required to provide alternative routes for flights and coverage of travel expenses including for overnight stays.

3. Will I receive DSA in case of change to travel restrictions between the booking of tickets and the travel date.

No, rebooking of tickets will be at the expense of host entities for cases where the host entity requested travel, including travel to assignment and repatriation.

4. Should I get tested for COVID-19?

In general, at present, tests for COVID-19 are limited to suspected cases and depend on local laboratory testing recommendations. Please see FAQ from Cigna above and WHO guidance on surveillance of COVID-19.

5. Will my insurance cover the cost of a test for COVID-19?

Similar to all diagnostic tests, these tests will be covered if:
- Prescribed by a qualified and registered medical doctor;
- Medically necessary;
- As per policy stipulations of the UNV plan

6. Will my insurance cover the cost of quarantine?
Quarantine for prevention, applies to people that may or may not have been diagnosed with COVID-19 but do not show symptoms and are being quarantined for preventive measures. This is not medical care and therefore not covered.

Quarantine/Isolation, applies to people that show symptoms and need to be diagnosed and/or treated. These patients are being hospitalised in isolation or in a single room in order not to contaminate others. This is medical care (inpatient care) and therefore covered.