

Consular services

What Consular Officers can do for South Africans detained/arrested abroad

- Establish contact with the detainee as soon as possible after verifying South African citizenship
- Provide general information about the legal system of the country of arrest where available. Information may include details on legal aid (if available) and prosecution, a list of lawyers (no recommendations may be made for a specific lawyer) remand, bail and appeal procedures so that they understands their rights and the processes involved;
- Maintain contact with the arrested South African citizens abroad with due observance of the laws and regulations of the arresting State.
- Undertake prison visits.
- Contact family or friends, to a maximum of three, only if authorised to do so by the detainee/ prisoner in writing.
- The detainee/ prisoner can change the people he/she wishes to receive information from the Department but must do so in writing
- Assistance with funds transfers: A maximum amount of R2 000, 00 per month per detainee/ prisoner may be deposited by family members/ friends.
- Upon release and impending return to South Africa, family or friends (in South Africa) may deposit funds at the Department of Home Affairs to pay for the ticket. The South African Representative will arrange the purchase of the ticket once proof is received that the money was deposited.

What services do Consular Officers NOT render to South African citizens?

- Institute court proceedings or obtain legal advice on behalf of South African nationals locally and abroad.
- Secure a release from prison/detention of South African nationals, to secure bail or an early trial (in foreign countries);
- Intervene in court and legal proceedings (in foreign countries);
- To secure the release of South African Nationals from prison, to secure bail or early trial;
- Support a South African national financially whilst in prison;
- Render any form of legal advice;
- Assist with the transfer of funds to a national who is not in distress;
- Interfere in or initiate court or legal proceedings on behalf of South African citizens and body corporate;
- Request local authorities to give preferential treatment to South Africans;
- Investigate crimes or deaths;
- Return a child that has been abducted by a parent / family member.
- Obtain a criminal record check on your behalf;
- Pay for cremations, burials or the repatriation of mortal remains to South Africa;
- Enforce a South African custody agreement abroad or compel a country to decide a custody case;
- Pay hotel, legal, medical or any other bills;
- Pay travelling expenses;
- Undertake work done by travel agents, airlines, banks, etc.;
- Obtain accommodation, visas-, study-, work permits or work on your behalf;
- Intervene on your behalf in disputes between employer and employee;
- Store personal effects or search for lost items;
- Accept personal mail and parcels;
- Issue pensions and social security benefits;
- Formally assist dual nationals in the country of their second nationality.

All South Africans are requested to respect the laws of the country in which you travel, work or study