

Ministry of Health and Wellness

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COMMUNIQUE

**Mauritius reopens its borders on the 1st of October 2021, with one of the highest full vaccination rate in Africa**

The Indian Ocean country of Mauritius continues with its proactive and transparent response to the global COVID crisis, as it prepares to complete the reopening of its borders to fully vaccinated visitors, but in a safe and secure manner, on the 1st of October 2021.

The nation has one of the highest fully vaccinated rates in Africa, currently standing at over 60 percent of the overall population (82 percent of the local adult population). The vaccination campaign is ongoing, and the rollout will also include those below 18 years old as from the end of September 2021.

The nation's modern health service has coped well throughout the pandemic, implementing strong protocols. The country's successful vaccination programme and overall health management resulted in very low hospitalisation numbers – an average of just over 3% hospitalized patients over the last 28 days, most of whom being in health facilities because of associated comorbidities rather than COVID-19 suggestive symptoms. It is to be noted that the infection rate is being closely managed and that the recent spike has been decreasing steadily over the last 2 weeks.

"We adopted a health-first approach with strict protocols to protect the population, from the beginning of the pandemic. Our public health services continue to operate to their normal capacity, with protocols being updated when relevant. Dedicated ICU facilities for COVID-19 patients have been set-up at the onset of the pandemic, and have been strengthened according to the Ministry's preparedness plan worked out in collaboration with the World Health Organisation", explained Dr K. Jagutpal, Minister of Health and Wellness. "We instituted airport screening and the quarantining of travelers since 2020. Our vaccination rollout has been systematic, and we have already exceeded our target of fully vaccinated adults well ahead of the complete reopening of our borders to vaccinated travelers on the 1st of October", added Minister Jagutpal.

Since the onset of the pandemic in Mauritius in March 2020, the country sadly recorded 45 fatalities directly inputted to COVID-19, out of a population of about 1.3 million.

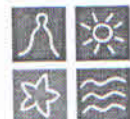
"We now all have to learn to live with COVID-19. The vaccination rollout in Mauritius was good and the vaccination rate high enough to make it safe to now ask the population to resume their normal lives, while respecting barrier measures", said Dr Laurent Musango, the local representative of the World Health Organisation. "Of course, in the context of a pandemic, there are always more avenues to be considered to optimize safety, but Mauritius is doing well", adds Dr Musango.

Unvaccinated travelers can also travel to Mauritius, subject to a 14 days in-room quarantine in a state designated hotel/facility. In line with its health-first approach, this same protocol for unvaccinated travelers will remain when the country reopens on the 1st of October.

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