

# LAUNCHING A NEW TOURIST VISA FOR SAUDI ARABIA

# Information pack

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has launched a new visa for tourists from across the world. From 27 September 2019, visitors will be able to obtain one-year, multiple-entry visas allowing them to spend up to 90 days in the country.

The new visa regime is a historic milestone in the implementation of Vision 2030. It will continue the ongoing process of opening and connecting the Kingdom to the world and will help to diversify the country's economy in line with Vision 2030 objectives.

Opening Saudi to tourism will provide visitors an opportunity to discover the Kingdom's many treasures – the warm hospitality of its people; its rich heritage and vibrant culture; and the diverse and breathtaking beauty of its landscapes, from the mountains of Asir to the beaches of the Red Sea to the shifting sands of the Empty Quarter.

The benefits to the people of Saudi Arabia will be enormous: the move will attract significant new investment in the travel and tourism sector and in improvements to the Kingdom's infrastructure, creating as many as 1 million new jobs by 2030.

# 2. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW VISA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has restructured its short-stay visa regime. The new regime provides for a number of short-stay visas, including a visa for tourists.

The new regime will be in place from 27 September 2019.

Visitors from 49 countries and regions will be able to apply for the visa online, while other visitors will be able to apply for the visas at the Saudi consulate in their home country.

Visitors from eligible countries can apply online through the online tourism portal at <u>visitsaudi.com</u>, or on arrival into Saudi Arabia through electronic kiosks or at immigration counters.

The following are the 49 countries that will be eligible to apply for e-Visas and Visas on arrival.

USA	Canada	Kazakhstan
Singapore	Brunei	New Zealand
South Korea	Japan	Spain
Belgium	Malaysia	Austria
Cyprus	UK	Croatia
Estonia	Andorra	Denmark
Germany	Bulgaria	France
Hungary	Czech Republic	Holland
Italy	Finland	Ireland
Lithuania	Greece	Liechtenstein
Monaco	Iceland	Malta
Poland	Latvia	Norway
Russia	Luxembourg	Romania
Slovenia	Montenegro	Slovakia
Switzerland	Portugal	Sweden
Australia	San Marino	Ukraine
China (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan)		

The new tourist visa allows tourists to stay for up to 3 months per entry, spending no more than 90 days a year in Saudi Arabia. The visa is valid for one year, with multiple entries.

The cost of applying for an e-Visa or a Visa on arrival is SAR 440 plus VAT.

Saudi Arabia intends to extend the e-Visa scheme to other markets as further developments are made to the Kingdom's tourism infrastructure.

# 3. INFORMATION ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA'S TOURISM SECTOR

#### i- Overview

Unlocking the potential of the tourism industry in Saudi Arabia tourism is an important part of the social and economic transformation taking place across the Kingdom, driven by Vision 2030.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world. It accounts for 10% of the world's GDP and 1 in 10 jobs. Importantly, it is a major driver of youth employment opportunities and start-ups and is one of the biggest employers of young people globally.

In Saudi Arabia, tourism represents an exciting untapped opportunity. To realise that potential, the Kingdom aims to attract 100 million international and domestic annual visits by 2030 – a significant increase from the 12 million pilgrims and 4 million business and leisure visitors currently welcomed into Saudi Arabia each year.

# ii- Developing the Saudi tourism sector

In line with Vision 2030 objectives, and in response to the increase in demand for leisure visits, the tourism sector will become a key pillar of the Kingdom's diversified economy, attracting significant new investment, driving innovation and creating up to 1 million new jobs by 2030.

Within the same time period, Saudi Arabia's airport capacity is likely to increase by 150 million passengers per annum, with an additional 500,000 hotel rooms added across the country.

By 2030, the aim is for tourism to contribute more than 10% towards the Kingdom's GDP – compared to 3% today and significant increase the amount of foreign direct investment flowing into the country's economy.

#### iii- Saudi Arabia's tourist attractions

Saudi Arabia is engaged in a wide-ranging development process for its tourism sector, including a series of giga-projects, new and improved infrastructure and the restoration and preservation of the Kingdom's main historical sites.

These development plans are being supported by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), the Kingdom's sovereign wealth fund, which has created a new entertainment fund worth over USD 2,5 billion.

Saudi Arabia boasts five UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The following is taken from the UNESCO website where further information is available.

#### Mada'in Saleh

The archaeological site of Mada'in Saleh is the first World Heritage Site to be inscribed by UNESCO in Saudi Arabia in 2008. Located in Al-Ula, in the northwest of the country, and formerly known as Hegra, it is the largest conserved site of the civilization of the Nabataeans south of Petra in Jordan. It features well-preserved monumental tombs with decorated facades dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The site also features some 50 inscriptions of the pre-Nabataean period and cave drawings. With its 111 monumental tombs, 94 of which are decorated, and water wells, the site is an outstanding example of the Nabataeans' architectural accomplishment and hydraulic expertise.

Further information <u>here</u>

# At-Turaif District in Ad-Diriyah

Listed in 2010, the World Heritage Site of At-Turaif was the first capital of the Saudi Dynasty and is located northwest of Riyadh. Founded in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it bears witness to the Najdi architectural style, which is specific to the center of the Arabian peninsula. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, its political and religious role increased, and the citadel at At-Turaif became the center of the temporal power of the House of Saud and the spread of the Salafi reform inside the Muslim religion. The site includes the remains of many palaces and an urban ensemble built on the edge of the Ad-Diriyah oasis.

Further information here

# Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Mecca

Historic Jeddah is a World Heritage Site situated on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, listed by UNESCO in 2014. From the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD the city was established as a major port for Indian Ocean trade routes, channeling goods to Mecca. It was also the gateway for Muslim pilgrims to Mecca who arrived by sea. These twin roles saw the city develop into a thriving multicultural center, characterized by a distinctive architectural tradition. The area includes tower houses built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the city's mercantile elites, and combining Red Sea coastal coral building traditions with influences and crafts from along the trade routes.

Further information <u>here</u>

# • Rock Art in the Ha'il Region

This World Heritage Site, listed in 2015, includes two components located in a desert landscape: Jabel Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal Al-Manjor and Raat at Shuwaymis. A lake once situated at the foot of the Umm Sinman hill range that has now disappeared used to be a source of fresh water for people and animals in the southern part of the Great Narfoud Desert. The ancestors of today's Arab populations have left traces of their passages in numerous petroglyphs and inscriptions on the rock face. Jabal Al-Manjor and Raat form the rocky escarpment of a wadi now covered in sand. They show numerous representations of human and animal figures covering 10,000 years of history.

Further information <u>here</u>

### Al-Ahsa Oasis

Situated in the east of the Arabian Peninsula, the Al-Ahsa Oasis is a World Heritage Site listed in 2018 which comprises gardens, canals, springs, wells and a drainage lake, as well as historical buildings, urban fabric and archaeological sites. They represent traces of continued human settlement in the Gulf region from the Neolithic to the present, as can be seen from remaining historic fortresses, mosques, wells, canals and other water management systems. Al-Ahsa is a unique geocultural landscape and an exceptional example of human interaction with the environment – and, with its 2.5 million date palms, the largest oasis in the world.

# Further information <u>here</u>

## Other sites of interest

Saudi Arabia has its own unique culture, landscape and history to attract tourists. With the development of improved infrastructure transport links across the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia will be a valuable addition to the global tourism industry.

## Saudi Arabia makes an attractive destination for adventure enthusiasts, with existing sites that include:

- o The Edge of the World
- o The Rub Al-Khali desert
- o The Al-Hada & Al-Shafa mountains

## In addition, international tourists looking to find out about Saudi culture can explore:

- o The Al-Masmak Fort in Riyadh
- o The King Abdulaziz Center (Ithra) in Dhahran
- o The Jameel House of Traditional Arts in Jeddah
- o A range of annual cultural and entertainment festivals across the Kingdom's different regions

## Other major tourism related projects in Saudi Arabia include:

- o NEOM city, a ground-breaking city of the future on the Red Sea coast
- o The luxury Red Sea Project and Amaala developments
- o The Qiddiya entertainment city near Riyadh
- o The Salwan project in Abha

# 4. LAWS AND ETIQUETTE FOR VISITORS

Information on important laws and etiquette is available to visitors applying for a Saudi visa on the official visa application website: visitsaudi.com.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide every citizen, resident and visitor with clarity on the rules that govern behavior in the Kingdom in order to ensure a positive experience during their visit.

# Laws and etiquette

Public etiquette in Saudi Arabia is informed by our cultural heritage and Islamic religion and underpinned by values that are familiar to people everywhere: respect for others, decorum in public and protection of privacy.

#### **Dress**

Both men and women are asked to dress modestly in public, avoiding tight-fitting clothing or clothes with profane language or images. Women should cover shoulders and knees in public.

#### **Public behavior**

Public displays of affection are not consistent with local culture and visitors should also avoid using profane language or gestures.

## Religion

At prayer time, five times a day, music is turned off in public places and many shops close briefly. For one month a year, during Ramadan, Muslims fast from dusk to dawn and so it is respectful to avoid eating or drinking in public during the day at this time.

### Alcohol and substances

The sale, purchase and consumption of alcohol is illegal in Saudi Arabia. It is illegal to bring alcohol or drugs into country.

# 5. ADDENDUM 1: FURTHER INFORMATION ON SAUDI TOURIST VISA

## i- Tourist visa context

On 27 September 2019, Saudi Arabia will open its doors to the world by launching a tourist visa. Tourists from Group A countries will be able to apply for a tourist visa through an e-Visa platform, or through a Visa on arrival upon arriving to KSA. Tourists from Group B countries will be able to apply through a Consulate visa available at KSA embassies and consulates.

This step will enable the world to see the hidden wonders of KSA, and help the Kingdom diversify its economy. The tourist visa will allow visitors to engage in tourism-related activities, and perform Umrah outside of Hajj season. Our aim is to embrace tourism and showcase Saudi hospitality by welcoming visitors in a warm, respectful way. The purpose of this document is to serve as a guide on visa characteristics, and to ensure consistency in knowledge for key stakeholders responsible for providing the Saudi tourism experience.

# ii- Tourist visa guidelines

# • Group A: e-Visa and Visa on arrival

## Visa characteristics

Dimension	Description
Launch date	27 September 2019 for applications and receiving tourists
Visa fee	SAR <b>4</b> 40
Visa fee breakdown	Visa base fee: SAR 300
	Health insurance fee: SAR 140
	+ Other fees such as VAT and payment processing
Entry	Visitors can enter KSA multiple times
Validity	Visa expires after 1 year from date of issuance
Maximum duration of stay	Visitors can stay up to 3 months per visit to KSA, with no
	more than 90 days per year

# **Application characteristics**

Dimension	Description
Minimum age of applicant	18 years old
Underage applicants	Require an individual above 18 years old to be the guardian
Passport validity when applying	Must be valid for at least 6 months at the time of entering Saudi Arabia*
Refund in case of rejection	Non-refundable
Overstay fees	Fee per each day of overstay: SAR 100
Religion of applicant	Religion is not relevant
Bilateral agreements	Countries with bilateral agreements can apply for the tourist visa through e-Visa or Visa on arrival, or through the consulate visa (USA, UK, South Korea and Japan)

Documents <u>not</u> required	The following documents are not required to get the visa:	
	Return ticket	
	Booking accommodation (Only address is required)	
	Hard copy of the visa, although a soft copy is advised	
Time taken to issue an e-Visa	5-30 minutes in most cases	
Visa pre-checks	Before boarding the flight to Saudi, airlines will check the e-	
	Visa, or the eligibility to obtain a Visa on arrival	

<sup>\*</sup>For citizens of USA, applications can still be processed within 6 months after the passport expires

# • Group B: Consulate visa

# Visa characteristics

Dimension	Description		
Launch date	27 September 2019 for applications and receiving visitors		
Visa fee	SAR <b>4</b> 40		
Visa fee breakdown	Visa base fee: SAR 300 Health insurance fee: SAR 140 + Other fees such as VAT and payment processing		
Entry	Visitors can enter Saudi Arabia multiple times		
Validity	Visa expires after 1 year from date of issuance		
Maximum duration of stay	Visitors can stay up to 3 months per visit to Saudi Arabia, with no more than 90 days per year		

# **Application characteristics**

Dimension	Description	
Minimum age of applicant	18 years old	
Underage applicants	Require an individual above 18 years old to be the guardian	
Passport validity when applying	Must be valid for at least 6 months at the time of entering Saudi Arabia*	
Refund in case of rejection	Non-refundable	
Overstay fees	Fee per each day of overstay: SAR 100	
Religion of applicant	Religion is not relevant	
Sponsor	No sponsor required	
Documents <u>required</u>	<ul> <li>The following documents are required to get the visa:</li> <li>Proof of accommodation</li> <li>Return ticket</li> <li>Proof of employment</li> <li>Bank statement</li> </ul>	
Supporting information	<ul><li>Identification</li><li>Home address</li><li>Travel itinerary</li></ul>	
Time taken to issue a visa	1-2 business days	
Visa pre-checks	Before boarding the flight to KSA, airlines will check the tourist visa	

<sup>\*</sup>For citizens of USA, applications can still be processed within 6 months after the passport expires

# Main entry points used by visitors

- 1) King Khaled airport in Riyadh
- 2) King Abdul-Aziz airport in Jeddah
- 3) King Fahad airport in Dammam
- 4) Prince Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz airport in Riyadh
- 5) King Fahd causeway
- 6) Al Batha land port

# iii- Country eligibility

• Group A: 49 countries eligible for e-Visa and Visa on arrival



 Group B: All other countries (non-Group A) are eligible for Consulate tourist visas through embassies

# iv- Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)

Dimension	Question	Comment
	Do I need a visa to travel to and enter Saudi Arabia as a tourist?	Unless you are a Saudi, a resident in Saudi, or a GCC citizen you will need a visa to enter Saudi Arabia. Based on your nationality, different visa options exist including e-Visa, Visa on arrival and Consulate visa.
	How can I get a tourist visa?	Depending on your nationality, you can apply for an e-Visa in the Saudi e-Visa platform, apply for a Visa on arrival upon entering the country at immigration, or apply for a Consulate visa ahead of your travels.
	What can I do if I have any questions related to the visa?	You can contact us through our online chat, phone number or by filling out the contact form on our website.
	Who is eligible for a tourist visa?	Depending on your nationality, you may fall into Group A or Group B countries. This classification outlines which type of tourist visa you can apply for. Group A countries: Applicants can apply for an e-Visa, or get a Visa on arrival upon entry to Saudi Arabia. Group B countries: Applicants can apply for a Consulate visa at the Saudi embassy or consulate closest to them.
Application process	How and when will I know my application status?	For e-Visa applicants, most applications will be processed within 30 minutes of submitting the application. For Visa on arrival applicants, applications will be processed at e-kiosks or by officers at immigration. For Consulate applicants, most applications will be processed within 1-2 business days of submission.
	Can a third-party organization or individual apply for me?	Yes, as long as you answer "Yes" to the application question: "Are you applying on behalf of someone else?"
	How can I get a Visa on arrival?	For Group A countries, upon arriving to KSA, you will be able to obtain a Visa on arrival through electronic kiosks or at immigration counters. You will be able to pay with a credit card or an international debit card. Please plan to bring a credit card or a debit card that works internationally.
	Can I visit KSA to receive medical treatment on the tourist visa?	The tourist visa cannot be used for medical purposes.
	What can I do with a tourist visa?	The tourist visa only allows you to partake in tourism-related activities, and perform Umrah. It excludes all other activities, e.g. working and studying.

	Can I apply for a tourist visa to perform Umrah/Hajj?	It is possible to apply for Umrah through the tourist visa. Bear in mind that Umrah cannot be performed during Hajj season. To perform Hajj, you must apply for a specific visa with the Ministry of Hajj.
	Can non-Muslims use the tourist visa to go to Makkah and Madinah?	Only Muslims are allowed to visit the cities of Makkah and Madinah.
	Can I perform Umrah on the tourist visa as an unaccompanied Muslim woman, without a male relative?	Yes, unaccompanied females are allowed to perform Umrah using the tourist visa, and do not need a male relative to do so.
	Can I apply for another type of Saudi visa if I have a valid tourist visa?	You can have more than one valid Saudi visa at a time. For e.g. it is possible to hold a valid tourist visa and business visa simultaneously.
	Can I use the tourist visa to come to KSA for business?	The tourist visa does not replace the KSA business visa. However, the tourist visa can only be used for short business trips. Short business trips include meetings, short conferences and workshops, and engagements that do not require any kind of employment contract to be in place.
	How long can I stay in Saudi Arabia as a tourist?	The tourist visa allows you to stay for up to 3 months per entry, spending no more than 90 days per year in Saudi Arabia. If you leave the country past your visa period, you shall pay a penalty of SAR 100 per day.
	How many times can I enter Saudi Arabia with my tourist visa?	The Saudi Arabia tourist visa is valid for one year with multiple entries.
Visa details	Can I apply for an extension for my Saudi Arabia tourist visa?	The one-year tourist visa may not be extended. In order to continue to visit KSA as a tourist once the visa expires, it is necessary to leave the country and apply for a new tourist visa.
	What is the process if I have already had a visa?	If your tourist visa has expired, you need to re-apply for a new visa.
	Can I apply for a tourist visa if I am a journalist by occupation?	As long as it is only being used for tourism-related activities, you can apply for the tourist visa irrespective of your occupation. However, a special permit is required for members of the media and journalism communities coming to KSA on work-related assignments.
	What are the eligibility criteria you must meet for a Saudi Arabia tourist visa?	You must be 18 years old or above. For travelers below 18 years old, a person over 18 years old must be your guardian when applying for the visa.
Requirements	What documents do I need to provide for an electronic tourist	In order to be eligible for a KSA tourist e-Visa, you must have a:  Passport from one of the 49 eligible

,,:_~?		countries
visa?		<ul><li>countries</li><li>Passport that is valid for at least 6</li></ul>
		months, except for citizens of USA, for
		whom applications can still be processed
		within 6 months after the passport
		expires
Is reli	igion relevant to the	Religion is not relevant when applying for the
	cation?	tourist visa.
		For Group A countries eligible for tourist e-
Whic	h documents are <u>not</u>	Visa and Visa on arrival, return ticket and
requi	red?	booking accommodation documents are not
		required for application or entry to KSA.
	need a medical insurance to	The visa includes a health insurance that
	y for a Saudi Arabia tourist	covers up to SAR 100,000.
visa?		D I: "
	h hospitals are covered by ealth insurance?	Under "Insurance Policy" on our website you
Requirements	eaith insurance:	will be able to find the list of hospitals covered by the insurance.
	have to apply separately for	Each family member must submit his or her
	amily members?	own application form. Visas for members
, , ,	,	under 18 years old are dependent on the
		guardian obtaining the visa.
		You will not need to show a hard copy of
Doll	have to print my e-Visa upon	your visa, as your visa will be electronically
arrivo	al?	connected to our system. However, we
		recommend that you keep a soft copy stored
		in a mobile device.
	t if I have been issued with a	When entering Saudi Arabia, you should
	passport since my Saudi	carry your new passport and your old
	ia visa was granted? apply as a solo female	passport that is linked to your visa.  There are no restrictions on women visiting
trave	· · ·	Saudi Arabia as solo travelers.
	woman, do I have to wear	It is not mandatory to wear a hijab or abaya.
	or abaya in Saudi?	However, all visitors should dress decently.
	,	Please refer to the official guidelines, shared
		on <u>visitsaudi.com</u> , for further information.
		The cost for a Saudi Arabia tourist visa is SAR
		440, excluding VAT and processing fees for all
	much will my application for	applicants. The fee breakdown is as follows:
Saud	i Arabia tourist visa cost?	Visa base fee of SAR 300
		Health insurance fee of SAR 140
		Members of GCC countries do not     require vises.
1A/hia	h electronic payment	require visas  MasterCard, Visa, American Express, UnionPay
	ods (credit card/e-	and ApplePay are accepted.
	nerce enabled debit cards)	a ippici aj ale deseptedi
	ccepted?	
	visa application was	The payment is non-refundable.
	ccessful, can I get my fee	
back	?	

	Which currencies are accepted?	For e-Visa and Visa on arrival, visa fees should be paid by a credit card or an international debit card in Saudi Riyals.
Data security and information	Is my personal information safe?	The e-Visa site operates under the principles outlined in the Cyber Security Act (CSA). Only data required to process your application will be collected and securely stored on our secured servers.
	How secure are payments through electronic payment cards (credit card/e-commerce enabled debit cards) on this site?	The payment gateway is secure and has been heavily tested to make sure your data is safe.
	Can I save my draft application and change it later?	Yes, you may save while completing your application.
	What format and size should my picture be?	The picture should be in JPG, JPEG, PNG, GIF and BMP format and not exceed a size of 100kb and the dimension must be 200x200.
Website and technical	I am not receiving the activation email to my inbox – what should I do?	Please check your spam email folder. If you are still unable to find the application, please contact us via online chat, phone number or by filling out the contact form on our website.
questions	I made a mistake on my e-Visa application. Can I modify the e- Visa after it is issued?	No, we cannot change or modify any details on the e-Visa once it has been issued. However, if you realize that a mistake has been made before your visa has been issued, please contact us via online chat, phone or by filling out the contact form on our website.

# v- Tourist visa disclaimer (MoFA)

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to have my fingerprint & iris data (biometrics) captured as part of the application procedure for an entry visa to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

# I further agree and declare as follows:

- I acknowledge that all the information provided is true and reliable. In addition, during my stay, I pledge to abide by the laws and rules of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and respect the Islamic customs and traditions of its people. In addition, I am aware that the mandated authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have the right to deny my entry and to send me back to where I came if I violate the laws and regulations, or if the information provided in my visa application are false or incorrect.
- I am fully aware that all intoxicating substances, narcotic drugs, indecent materials and publications, as well as publications related to any religious beliefs or political tendencies that contradict with Islam are prohibited in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- I am fully aware of the clearance procedures and controls about medicine containing narcotic or psychotropic substances that are held by patients, who are coming to the Kingdom or departing from the country, for their personal use, as listed in the below link:
- http://www.sfda.gov.sa/ar/drug/drug\_reg/pages/drug\_reg.aspx in violation of that, I am aware that penalties and punishment as stipulated in the Law of Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances and its implementing regulations thereto related shall be enforced.
- I pledge to adhere to the type of visa, its terms and duration, and to leave KSA before expiry of the specified duration. I am also fully aware that my violation of the enforced regulations in KSA or violation of any of the prohibitions mentioned above or the entry visa shall subject me to the penalty and the application of punishments stipulated by the laws regulating the process of handling people coming to the Kingdom with visas for Umrah and others issued by Royal Decree No. (M/42), on18/10/1404 H and amended by Royal Decree No. (M/9) on 1/5/1420 H, as well as the penalties of work regulations violation that are issued by the Council of Ministers Resolution No. (140) on 6/5/1434 AH.
- I acknowledge that the Saudi authorities have the right to send me back from the port of entry on my own expenses or deport me from KSA after entering. Also, Saudi authorities have the right to apply the stipulated penalties, if proved at any time after obtaining the visa or the residency that I have submitted incorrect papers, documents or provided false statements to any competent Saudi authority inside or abroad, in order to obtain a visa or residence permit for myself or for someone else, or being a contributor or partner in providing such information or documents that are false.
- I acknowledge that drug dealing or smuggling drugs into the Kingdom is a crime punishable by death penalty.
- I acknowledge and pledge that I am fully responsible that all information provided shall be correct and exactly as written in the passport used in my travel and entrance to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. If the information provided is incorrect or my name appears to be included in the list specifying prohibited people, then my application shall be rejected, my visa cancelled, or I shall be prevented to enter the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia even with a valid visa. Moreover, I acknowledge the right of the Saudi authorities to deport me back to the port of entry at my own expense without any right to claim compensation.