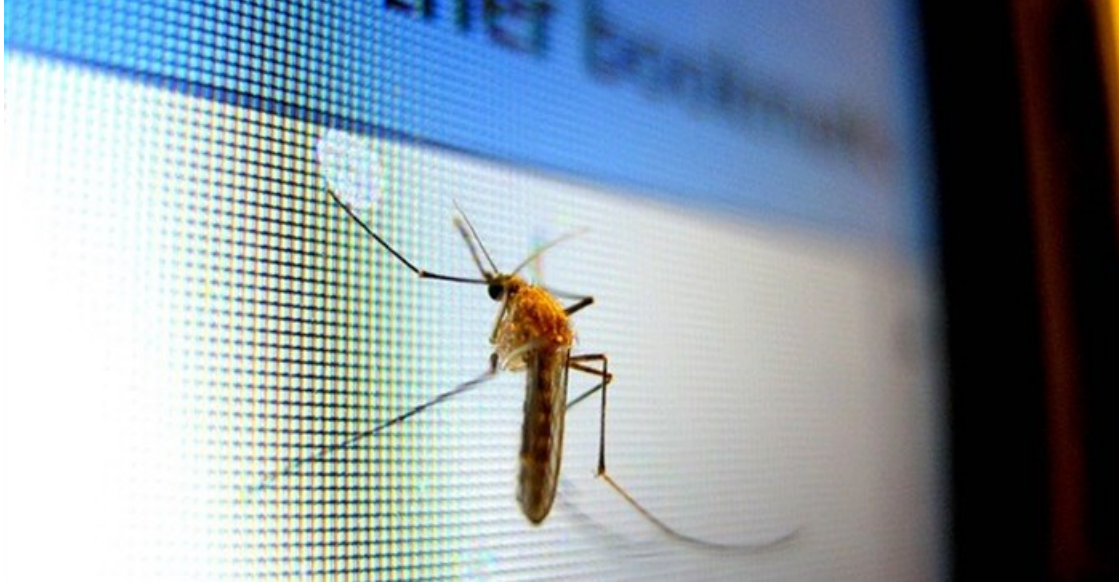


# SAA continues flying to Brazil despite virus outbreak

South African Airways (SAA) will continue to fly between Johannesburg and Sao Paulo, in Brazil, after the World Health Organization concluded that there is no justification to impose a travel ban due to the outbreak of the Zika virus.



gloson via [pixabay](#)

“SAA would like to notify its customers that the airline will continue to offer a daily service between Johannesburg and Sao Paulo in Brazil after the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded there was no justification to impose a travel ban to Latin America and the Caribbean due to the outbreak of the Zika virus,” SAA spokesperson Tlali Tlali said.

## Necessary precautions

At a meeting last week, the WHO’s International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee on the Zika virus concluded that the outbreak of the virus is a “public health emergency of international concern” but saw no health justification to restrict travel and trade in areas affected by the virus.

“It is strongly recommended that travellers take the necessary precaution and consult with their medical or healthcare practitioners for advice,” said the airline.

In addition, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) said it agrees with the South African National Department of Health that pregnant women should delay their travel to areas with current outbreaks of the virus.

## Virus not present in South Africa

The NICD said the virus is not present in South Africa. “It’s never been shown to be present in Africa below Uganda. We may see some return travellers who have been to Brazil having mild illness – but they do not pose a risk to others here,” said the NICD.

The airline said it already has communicable disease management procedures in place to protect passengers, crew and ground staff. “The staff is adequately trained to manage incidents of this nature, should a need arise. SAA would like to further reassure customers that the airline has regulated disinfection procedures in place for all flights departing or arriving from South America. Extra disinfectant spray has been loaded to reinforce measures already in place,” said Tlali.

SAA said the risk of mosquito-borne transmission on aircraft is extremely low.

## **Safety measures**

The company urged everyone travelling to South America’s high-risk areas to avoid known mosquito high concentrated areas.

Travellers are also encouraged to wear clothing that covers most parts of their bodies to prevent mosquito bites.

Travellers were also urged to see a healthcare practitioner if pregnant and develop fever, a rash, joint pain or red eyes within two weeks after travelling to a country where Zika virus cases have been reported. Travellers were also encouraged to tell their healthcare provider about where they travelled.

“The airline remains committed to ensuring the enforcement of national and international health protocols associated with air transport in the interests of its passengers and crew.”

Travellers may use these links for additional information: [outbreak@nicd.ac.za](mailto:outbreak@nicd.ac.za), [WHO](#), [CDC](#).

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