



5 November 2021

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0402

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to the Very High-Risk Country category

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 7 October 2021. You requested:

How the Very High-Risk Country category is determined, and the source of the statistics this determination is calculated from?

Is there a fair criterion of classifying these countries in the VHR list or is it that the countries are being discriminated because of them being developing nations?

The criteria for considering 'very high risk' (VHR) designation takes into consideration a broad range of factors including, but not limited to:

- The number of positive cases as a percentage of arrivals into New Zealand;
- Whether cases in the country are rising rapidly, and the predominant strain (i.e. the variant of concern);
- The level of confidence in the country's health system capacity and its testing measures; and
- Vaccination coverage rates in the country.

Officials also consider data and information from a range of publicly available international sources relating to the global situation on a regular basis.

Ministers are provided with a public health risk assessment as part of a review of the VHR countries which considers the current situation and whether it has improved in relation to the above factors.

A review of the country risk classification was provided to Ministers for consideration on 16 August 2021. Due to the Delta outbreak on 17 August 2021, there have not yet been any decisions regarding a change in risk designation for these countries. The risk designation for these countries is still under active consideration.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



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