

MEDIA STATEMENT

13 March 2022

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY CONFIRMS THE INDEFINITE SUSPENSION OF COMAIR'S AIR OPERATOR CERTIFICATE

Johannesburg – Following the 24hour precautionary suspension of Comair PTY Ltd.'s Air Operator Certificate (AOC) privileges on Saturday morning 12 March 2022, the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) confirms that the AOC is now indefinitely suspended pending the Operator addressing all the findings as communicated by the Regulator on Saturday morning.

The SACAA recognises the efforts of the Operator to close the findings as speedily as possible and in this regard the Operator started dispatching the evidence to the Regulator from the evening of Saturday 12 March 2022. The inspectorate team worked through the night to review the evidence received and as at 06:30am on the morning of 13 March 2022 the Regulator accepted the corrective action and evidence submitted in respect of one Level 1 finding. This therefore means this finding is now closed. The review of the rest of the evidence of which the latest was received around 07:30 this morning, will continue to be assessed and reviewed by the inspectorate this morning.

According to the Civil Aviation Regulations (CARs), the Operator can appeal the decision of the suspension to the Director in terms of Part 185.04.2.

The suspension follows the visit by the SACAA to the Operator to investigate and determine the cause of a spate of occurrences affecting a concerning number of flights operated by Kulula.com and BA Comair. The SACAA sought to confirm Comair's compliance with applicable Civil Aviation Regulations (CARs). The inspection was also aimed at reviewing Comair's quality control management system (QC) and safety management systems (SMS) to establish compliance related to reporting, analysis and follow-up on occurrences, and corrective action plans to prevent recurrence.

This resulted in the Regulator raising three (3) level 1 findings, and one (1) level 2 finding. In terms of the oversight philosophy of the Regulator, a level 1 finding is an outcome which poses an immediate risk to safety and security, and it must be closed with immediate effect and a level 2 finding must be closed within 7 days.

The SACAA is fully committed to ensuring that the Operator is back in the air and has dedicated a full team to assess and review the evidence as it gets submitted. The commitment to safety in this case supersedes any other need and this is to ensure that South Africa maintains its safety record of having ZERO fatal airline accidents in over thirty years on South African soil. The lives of our aviation personnel and the users of civil aviation services is paramount, and it is a responsibility the Regulator does not take lightly.

This discipline in ensuring high levels of compliance with civil aviation safety and security is demonstrated by the continuous prestigious performance of South Africa in international safety and security assessments. South Africa is periodically subjected to independent international audits by bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to measure South Africa's compliance to the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of this United Nations body. In this regard, South Africa was last audited by ICAO in 2018 in terms of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme – Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP CMA) and the country improved its compliance levels in that audit. Continuous improvement is a principle which the Regulator will work hard at elevating as it ensures that aviation remains the safest mode of transport in this country.

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Issued by the South African Civil Aviation Authority

About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is a Schedule 3A public entity reporting to the Department of Transport established in terms of the Civil Aviation Authority Act, 2009 (Act No 13 of 2009) (the Act). In terms of mandate, the SACAA is tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure, and sustainable civil aviation environment, by regulating and overseeing the functioning and development of the industry in an efficient, cost-effective, and customer-friendly manner according to international standards. The SACAA is governed and controlled by the Civil Aviation Authority Board.

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