

# Buying land

## Property rights for foreigners

### Foreign Property Regulations

- Foreign investors have the right to own or rent immovable property, in accordance with the 'Immovable Property: Lease and Sale by Foreigners Law' No. 40 for the year 1953, and the amendments of 1960 and 1962.
- The Law allows foreign ownership in Palestine of the necessary amount of land for living, construction, and agricultural purposes.
- The 'Land Transfer Law' of 1920 allows any registered company within Palestine to own the land necessary for its projects and activities.
- The sale or transfer of land must be approved by the Palestinian Cabinet, which in return publishes a list of the names and nationalities of investors (land owners), the area of the land they own, and the location. On February 13, 2008, the Palestinian Cabinet published a list of foreign investors and the lands purchased by them.

### Land Registration Procedures

As only about 40% of land in the West Bank & Gaza Strip is officially registered, it is important to check the status of any land purchased by consulting the land authority.

The following procedures must be followed when purchasing immovable property:

- Request an application from the Land Authority allowing a foreigner to purchase and own immovable property.
- After the Authority insures that the property is legally owned by the vendor, it sends an official request to the specialized bodies in the Palestinian Cabinet to obtain permission and authorization to facilitate that transaction of immovable property.
- The Office of the Prime Minister and specialized bodies verify that the information related to the foreign investor is correct and valid, after which a decision is made by the Prime Minister's Office.
- After obtaining the approval of the Cabinet the land authority begins the basic procedures and collects the fees and stamps necessary for the registration process.
- The whole process involves 10 procedures and takes an average of 72 days. The average cost of registering land and property is 2.2% of its value, compared to 7.5% in Israel and 10.0% in Jordan.





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### Positive Aspects

There are several benefits to the Palestinian national interest through the regulations and legislation which give foreign investors the right to own and rent Palestinian lands, most importantly:

- Promoting investment and economic projects.
- Assisting in the Palestinian development process.
- Encouraging work on projects recovering and reclaiming Palestinian land.
- Avoiding problems and conflicts which might occur when foreign investors contract with local citizens to own immovable property.
- Preventing the accidental sale of land to Zionist organizations.

### Land Authority

- Established by the presidential decree No. 10 for the year 2002, it is the main body responsible for the land issue in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Different departments from the ministries of Justice, Public Work, and Ministry of Housing were added to the Authority.
- The main goal of the Land Authority is to preserve land ownership and various rights related to it, by surveying and keeping account of land registries and working on resolving disputes related to land borders.
- The Land Authority can be reached by Phone: +970-2-2413711.

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