

**CHAPTER 140**  
**INTERNATIONAL PERSONS LANDHOLDING**

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**CHAPTER 140**

INTERNATIONAL PERSONS LANDHOLDING

**An Act to repeal the Immovable Property (Acquisition by Foreign Persons) Act, 3 of 1981, and to facilitate the holding of land by non-Bahamians and by companies under their control.** 41 of 1993  
12 of 1995  
32 of 1995

*[Assent 31st December, 1993]*  
*[Commencement 1st January, 1994]*

1. This Act may be cited as the International Persons Landholding Act, 1993.

Short title.

2. (1) A non-Bahamian, (other than a permanent resident or a non-Bahamian acquiring land or an interest in land under a devise or by inheritance), who purchases or acquires an interest in a condominium, or property vacant or otherwise to be used by him as a single family dwelling or for the construction of such a dwelling shall apply to the Secretary to the Board to register the purchase or acquisition and the Secretary upon receipt of the respective fee specified in the Schedule shall register that purchase or acquisition in the register and issue a certificate to the applicant unless the property being acquired is undeveloped land and the non-Bahamian would by virtue of the acquisition become the holder of five or more contiguous acres of land in The Bahamas.

No permit required for certain purchases by non-Bahamians of property.

(2) A permanent resident who acquires land or an interest in land shall apply to the Secretary to the Board to have the acquisition registered with the Board and the Secretary upon receipt of the respective fee specified in the Schedule shall register that purchase or acquisition in the register and issue a certificate to the applicant.

(3) A non-Bahamian who acquires land or an interest in land under a devise or by inheritance shall apply to the Secretary to the Board to have the acquisition registered with the Board and the Secretary upon receipt of the respective fee specified in the Schedule shall register the acquisition in the register and issue a certificate to the applicant.

(4) An application to the Board to have a purchase or acquisition registered under this section shall be in writing signed by the non-Bahamian who made the purchase or acquisition or his attorney and shall be in the appropriate form in the Schedule.

3. (1) A non-Bahamian (other than a permanent resident or non-Bahamian acquiring land or an interest in land under a devise or by inheritance) who intends to acquire land or an interest in land either by way of freehold or leasehold and which acquisition is not within section 2(1) shall obtain a permit from the Board to make the acquisition by making the requisite application and paying the appropriate fee specified in the Schedule to the Secretary to the Board otherwise any acquisition shall be null and void and be without effect for all purpose of law in the absence of such a permit; but the non-Bahamian making the acquisition shall be entitled to recover with such legitimate deductions as may be justified in law any and all monies paid by him as consideration for the acquisition.

Permit required for certain purchases of property by non-Bahamians.

(2) The Board may with respect to an application for a permit in its absolute discretion grant or refuse to grant a permit.

(3) An application to the Board for the grant of a permit shall be in writing signed by the non-Bahamian seeking the permit or his attorney and shall be in the form in the

## Schedule.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection (1) the Board may in its absolute discretion and on such terms and conditions as it may think fit validate any purported conveyance, mortgage, transfer of mortgage or other acquisition of an interest in land made contrary to subsection (1) by issuing a permit to the non-Bahamian; and the exercise of the power by the Board under this subsection shall have the effect of causing the conveyance, mortgage, transfer of mortgage or other acquisition which by subsection (1) is to be null and void to be valid and of full effect as if it were made subsequent to the grant of a permit.

4. (1) The documents whereby any acquisition by a non-Bahamian of an interest in land is made and to which section 2 applies together with the respective certificate issued by the Secretary to the Board shall be recorded in the Registrar General's Department and where the acquisition is recorded in that Department without requisite certificate that registration shall be null and void and be without effect for all purposes of law.

Recording of registration certificate or permit with acquisition documents in Registrar General's Department.

(2) The documents whereby an acquisition of an interest in land is made and to which section 3 applies shall on being recorded in the Registrar General's Department be accompanied by the requisite permit otherwise the recording in that Department without the permit shall be null and void and be without effect for all purposes of law.

(3) The priority of the transactions relating to the acquisition of land by non-Bahamians shall be no different from that which relates to the acquisition of real property not affected by this Act.

5. Sections 2 and 3 shall not apply where the non-Bahamian acquiring or going into possession of the property is a bank or trust company licensed under the provisions of the Banks and Trust Companies Regulation Act, or any other Act replacing it or an insurer registered under the provisions of the Insurance Act, or any other Act replacing it where the acquisition or going into possession is under a mortgage or debenture.

Mortgagee or debenture holder does not require a permit.

6. Where a non-Bahamian acquires any land or an interest in land by or reason of that property becoming vested in him by virtue of any order of a court or where a non-Bahamian goes into possession of property as a mortgagee, then he shall make application to the Board to have the acquisition or going into possession registered with the Board and the Secretary to the Board upon receipt of the appropriate fee shall register that acquisition or going into possession and issue a certificate of registration to the applicant.

Holding of land acquired by a non-Bahamian under order of a court or by going into possession as a mortgagee.

7. Nothing in sections 2 and 3 shall be construed so as to require a certificate of registration or the grant of a permit in respect of the acquisition of immovable property by any religious organisation incorporated as a non-profit company in accordance with Part VI of the Companies Act, or incorporated by Act of Parliament either in its own name or in the name of any of its functionaries including trustees.

Exemption of religious organisations.

8. Nothing in section 3 shall be construed so as to require the grant of a permit-

- (a) in respect of the acquisition of a non-Bahamian of any immovable property by way of judgment for foreclosure under a mortgage; or
- (b) in respect of a foreign state upon which there has been conferred by agreement or treaty the right to acquire immovable property in The Bahamas,

Only registration with Board required in certain cases.

save however the non-Bahamian or the foreign state, as the case may be, shall make application to the Board to have that acquisition of interest in immovable property registered with the Board and the Secretary to the Board upon receipt of the appropriate fee (if any) register that acquisition and issue a certificate of registration to the applicant.

9. (1) Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to require the registration with, or the grant of a permit by, the Board of the acquisition of an interest in immovable property under a lease or letting agreement unless the lease or letting agreement is for the purpose of trade or business and enables the lessee or tenant to prolong the term beyond twenty-one (21) years in which case the lessee or tenant shall register the lease or letting agreement with the Board by making application and paying the appropriate fee therefor to the Secretary to the Board.

Requirement to register certain business leases.

(2) A lease or letting agreement to which subsection (1) applies shall in the absence of registration with the Board be null and void and be without effect for all purposes of law.

10. The rate of stamp duty payable by a non-Bahamian in respect of a transaction relating to the acquisition of an interest in land shall be the same as that which would be payable by a Bahamian.

Non-Bahamian to pay same stamp duty as Bahamian.

11. A non-Bahamian who owns a home in The Bahamas shall be entitled to make

Issue of an

application to the Director of Immigration for an annual home owner resident card and the Director shall, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Immigration Act upon being satisfied of that ownership and that such person is not a member of a prohibitive class of persons within the meaning of the Immigration Act or is not otherwise undesirable and is able to maintain himself and his dependants in The Bahamas issue the card to the applicant upon payment by him of the specified fee in the Schedule entitling him, his spouse and minor children (if any) to enter and remain in The Bahamas for the duration of the card unless any of them is otherwise prohibited under the provisions of that Act from entry into The Bahamas.

annual residence card to a non-Bahamian.

**12.** (1) There is established for the purposes of this Act, an Investments Board which shall consist of-

Establishment of the Board.

- (a) the Prime Minister, who shall be the Chairman of the Board; and
- (b) such other Ministers as may be appointed by the Prime Minister.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Act the Board may regulate its own proceedings.

(3) The Secretary to the Board shall maintain a register in such form and containing such particulars as the Board may direct for the purpose of effecting the registrations required by section 2.

(4) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any law a permit issued under the repealed Act shall be of the same effect as if it were issued by the Board under this Act and in that behalf the Board may extend the duration of or vary or delete any conditions to which that permit was issued as the Board sees fit upon application by the holder of the permit.

(5) The Board may in its absolute discretion and on such terms and conditions as it may think fit validate any purported acquisition or conveyance made contrary to the provisions of the repealed Act before the coming into operation of this Act by issuing such permit as was necessary as if those provisions had not been repealed and the exercise of this power by the Board shall have the effect of causing the acquisition or conveyance to be full effect as if it were made subsequent to the grant of the permit.

(6) Where a non-Bahamian pursuant to an application has obtained a permit and in which application the intended usage of the property acquired has been stated and there is subsequent to the issue of the permit a change in that usage the non-Bahamian shall make application to the Board for a variation of the permit, otherwise the permit shall cease to be valid.

**13.** The Governor-General may, on the advice of the Board, by order amend the Schedule.

Amendment of Schedule.

**14.** (1) In this Act-

Interpretation.

"Bahamian company" means a company incorporated and registered in The Bahamas where all its shares or other capital is beneficially owned by one or more citizens of The Bahamas directly or through another Bahamian company and it is not in any manner, whether directly or indirectly controlled by any non-Bahamians;

"the Board" means the Investments Board that is established under section 12;

"certificate" means a certificate of registration issued by the Secretary to the Board under section 3 certifying that an acquisition by a non-Bahamian to which that section applies has been duly registered;

"debenture" includes every mortgage or charge by a company, whether floating or otherwise, on any of the company's property or on its undertaking or on its uncalled capital, and also every obligation by the company (not being a bill of exchange or promissory note) for payment of a debt or the repayment of monies lent or to be lent, and also debenture stock;

"non-Bahamian" means-

- (a) a person who is not a citizen of The Bahamas; or
- (b) a company incorporated in The Bahamas under the Companies Act where any of its shares or other capital is beneficially owned by a person who is not a citizen or where it is in any manner, whether directly or indirectly, controlled by one or more of those persons; or
- (c) a company formed and incorporated at any place outside The Bahamas; or
- (d) an international organisation;

"permanent resident" means a person to whom a valid and subsisting permanent residence certificate granted under section 13 of the Immigration Act relates, and a wife

or dependent child of such a person whose name is endorsed on the certificate under section 14 of that Act;

"permit" means a permit granted under section 3 by the Board for the purposes of this Act authorising the acquisition, or as the case may be, the holding of land by a non-Bahamian;

"register" means the register kept by the Secretary to the Board under section 12;

"Secretary to the Board" means the person designated by the Prime Minister by notice in the *Gazette* as performing the functions of Secretary to the Board for the purposes of this Act;

"share" includes stock, and, in the case of a company not having a share capital, the interest or equity of a member in the assets of the company.

(2) No share shall be deemed to be beneficially owned by a citizen of The Bahamas or a Bahamian company if-

- (a) the citizen of The Bahamas or the Bahamian company owning that share is in any way under any obligation, other than by way of a *bona fide* mortgage or debenture, to, or otherwise may exercise any right attaching to that share at the instance of, or for, the benefit of any non-Bahamian; or
- (b) that share is held by the citizen of The Bahamas or the Bahamian company jointly or severally with a non-Bahamian.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2), a share shall be deemed to be beneficially owned by a citizen of The Bahamas or a Bahamian company if-

- (a) it is owned by a citizen of The Bahamas or a Bahamian company as trustee and every person having a beneficial interest in the trust is a citizen of The Bahamas or a Bahamian company;
- (b) it is owned by a citizen of The Bahamas or a Bahamian company as a nominee for another who is also a citizen of The Bahamas or a Bahamian company and no one is in any way under an obligation, other than by way of a *bona fide* mortgage or debenture, to exercise any right attaching to that share at the instance of, or for the benefit of, any person who is a non-Bahamian.

(4) For the purpose of this Act, a body or owner association of persons, whether corporate or not shall be deemed to be controlled by a non-Bahamian, if the Board is satisfied that effective control is, either directly or indirectly, or by reason of any arrangement, artifice or device vested in, or permitted to pass to, persons who are not citizens of The Bahamas or Bahamian companies.

(5) The provisions of this Act shall not apply to any share held by a company registered under the provisions of the Banks and Trust Companies Regulation Act, or the Insurance Act, as a trustee of a settlement established by a citizen of The Bahamas.

**SCHEDULE**

**FORMS (Part A)**

THE INTERNATIONAL PERSONS LANDHOLDING ACT, 1993

**FORM 1**

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION**

To: The Secretary to the Board  
Investments Board  
P. O. Box CB 10980  
Nassau, The Bahamas

Full name of Applicant/s.....

Residential/registered address  
of  
Applicant/s .....

Nationally of Applicant/s [i]  
\* .....

Place and date of birth of  
Applicant/s.....

Occupation.....

Bahamas Immigration Status (if any) of Applicant/s.....

Evidence of payment of Real Property Tax and Stamp Duty.....

Description and location of property held/acquired by the Applicant.....

State whether a house is situated on the property .....

State intended use of property acquired .....

A list of properties (if any) in The Bahamas held by the Applicant/s.....

Full name, address and nationality of Vendor/s.....

Purchase price and state how funded and whether by local or foreign source.....

This application should be accompanied by a Bankers Draft or postal Money Order in the sum of Bahamian \$25.00 made payable to "The Public Treasury".

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant or his Attorney

**FORM 2  
CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION  
ISSUED BY THE INVESTMENTS BOARD**

THE INTERNATIONAL PERSONS LANDHOLDING ACT, 1993

This is to certify that the acquisition of the following property to wit:  
has been registered with the Investments Board on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_  
in the name of: .....

for use as .....

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary to the Board  
Investments Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**FORM 3  
APPLICATION FOR PERMIT**

INTERNATIONAL PERSONS LANDHOLDING ACT, 1993

To: The Secretary to the Board  
Investments Board  
P. O. Box CB 10980  
Nassau, The Bahamas

Full name of Applicant/s.....

Residential/registered address of Applicant.....

Nationality of Applicant/s [ii]  
\* .....

Place and date of birth of Applicant/s .....

Occupation.....

Bahamas Immigration Status (if any) of Applicant/s .....

Description and location of property held/ to be acquired by the Applicant .....

State whether a house is situated on the property .....

State intended use of property acquired .....

A list of properties (if any) in The Bahamas held by the Applicant/s .....

Full name, address and nationality of Vendor/s .....

Purchase price and state how funded and whether by local or foreign source .....

Purpose for which property is being or to be used-where land to be used for development purposes, state the nature and extent of the development, the period of time within which such will be carried out and how the cost thereof will be funded.

Signature of Applicant or his Attorney

This application should be accompanied by a Bankers Draft or Postal Money Order in the sum of Bahamian \$25.00 made payable to "The Public Treasury".

Where needed further details may be submitted on an attached sheet and signed.

**FORM 4**  
**PERMIT ISSUED BY THE INVESTMENTS BOARD**  
THE INTERNATIONAL PERSONS LANDHOLDING ACT, 1993

To:

Permission is hereby granted you to acquire/hold the following property to wit-  
for use.....

.....  
Secretary to the Board  
Investments Board

.....  
DATE

**FEES (Part B)**

	\$
Application for registration .....	25.00
Application for permit .....	25.00
Upon issue of certificate of registration or issue of permit where-	
(a) the value [iii] * of the property is \$50,000 and under .....	50.00
(b) the value of the property is over \$50,000 but under \$101,000 .....	75.00
(c) the value of the property is \$101,000 and over .....	100.00
Home owner resident card .....	500.00

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[i] In the case of a body corporate state the amount or number of share or stocks issued, the respected nationalities of the beneficial owners thereof and the liens existing against such shares or stock on a separate sheet.

[ii]\* In the case of a foreign person who is a body corporate state the amount or number of share or stocks issued, the respective nationalities of the beneficial owners thereof and the liens existing against such shares or stock on a separate sheet.

[iii] value in relation to a lease is the annual rent reserved times the number of years.