

Israel Updates Partner Visa Rules to Allow Two-Year Visas for International Couples

New PIBA rules allow longer B1 and A5 visas for foreign partners of Israelis, reducing renewals during the gradual status process.

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Israel's Population and Immigration Authority (PIBA) has introduced significant changes to the procedures governing legal status for foreign partners of Israeli citizens, including a new option to issue certain B1 and A5 visas for up to two years at a time.



The July 2026 updates affect both married and unmarried international couples navigating Israel's gradual process for obtaining legal status. Decker, Pex, Levi Law Offices, an Israeli law firm representing foreign nationals and international couples in immigration and citizenship matters, says the changes could reduce the administrative burden faced by thousands of couples navigating the process.

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The option to receive a two-year visa is a meaningful improvement for international couples, reducing renewals while providing greater stability throughout the gradual process.”

Joshua Pex

The most significant change concerns the duration of partner visas.

Under the revised procedures, PIBA may now issue B1 and A5 visas for periods of up to two years after the first visa in the process. Previously, couples generally had to renew their visas annually.

The first visa remains valid for one year. Subsequent visas, however, may be issued for up to two years at PIBA's discretion.

For married couples, this could mean receiving a first A5 temporary residency visa for one year,

followed by an A5 visa valid for up to two years and a final A5 visa covering the remaining period.

For unmarried couples, the process may include a first B1 visa for one year, a subsequent B1 visa for up to two years, followed by A5 visas that may also be issued for periods of up to two years.

Importantly, the overall length of the gradual process has not been shortened. Married couples generally remain in the A5 stage for four years, while unmarried couples generally complete three years under B1 status followed by four years under A5 status.

The change instead reduces how frequently qualifying couples may need to appear at PIBA offices and apply for visa extensions.



Decker, Pex, Levi - Immigration Law Firm

For international couples who have spent years navigating annual appointments, documentation requirements and renewal fees, the ability to receive a longer visa could significantly reduce the administrative burden associated with maintaining legal status in Israel.

The revised procedures also introduce greater flexibility in cases involving missing documents.

In exceptional circumstances, a PIBA Regional Director may now authorize an applicant to enter the gradual process even when a normally required document cannot initially be provided. Applicants must demonstrate genuine efforts to obtain the document and provide evidence explaining the exceptional circumstances preventing its submission.

The exemption does not eliminate the requirement entirely. Applicants must still provide the necessary documentation before completing the gradual process.

Another change may help address delays at the final stage of the process for married couples. Deputy office managers are now authorized under the updated spouse procedure to process and approve certain citizenship applications at the conclusion of the gradual process, rather than leaving that authority solely with the office manager.

The updated rules also introduce important considerations for foreign partners currently

residing in Israel without valid legal status.

Where PIBA determines that a relationship began only after the foreign partner's previous visa expired, the foreign partner may, in certain circumstances, be required to leave Israel before the partner visa procedure can continue. The revised policy also provides that where the couple's interview establishes that the relationship is genuine, the foreign partner will not be required to leave on that basis.

Because the practical implementation of the revised procedures may differ between cases and PIBA branches, couples with upcoming renewals should carefully review how the new rules apply to their circumstances.

"The possibility of receiving a two-year visa is a meaningful improvement for international couples navigating Israel's gradual process," said Joshua Pex, immigration attorney and founding partner at Decker, Pex, Levi Law Offices. "Fewer renewals can mean fewer appointments, lower administrative costs and greater stability for couples who may spend several years completing the process."

Couples approaching a B1 or A5 renewal may now request a visa valid for up to two years where the updated procedure permits it. However, the new policy authorizes PIBA to issue longer visas; it does not guarantee that every applicant will receive the maximum two-year validity.

Decker, Pex, Levi Law Offices represents married and unmarried couples throughout Israel's partner visa and gradual status procedures, including applications for [B1 work visas](#), A5 temporary residency, permanent residency and [Israeli citizenship](#).

Foreign partners and Israeli citizens affected by the new PIBA partner visa rules should review their current status and upcoming renewal dates to determine whether they may benefit from the updated procedures.

About Decker, Pex, Levi Law Offices

Decker, Pex, Levi Law Offices is an Israeli law firm with offices in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The firm advises Israeli and international clients on immigration, citizenship, visas, family reunification and other matters involving the Population and Immigration Authority. Its attorneys represent foreign partners of Israeli citizens throughout the gradual process, from initial status applications through residency and citizenship.

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