



LEGAL ALERT

UGANDA INTRODUCES MANDATORY REGISTRATION FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS:

**WHAT EMPLOYERS AND RESIDENTS
NEED TO KNOW**

1 Introduction

The National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) has announced the commencement of the registration of foreign nationals residing in Uganda, effective 10 June 2026. Although the legal requirement for the registration of aliens has existed for several years under Uganda's legislative framework, the Government has now moved to implement the requirement in a structured and enforceable manner.

The registration exercise forms part of the Government's broader efforts to strengthen population management, enhance identity verification systems, improve immigration compliance, and maintain an accurate record of foreign nationals residing within Uganda. Foreign nationals who fall within the prescribed categories are therefore required to comply with the registration requirements and obtain an Alien Identification Card.

This Alert highlights the legal basis for the registration requirement, the registration process, the obligations arising after registration, and the implications of non-compliance.

2 Legal Basis

The obligation to register is established under section 54(1)(b) of the Registration of Persons Act, Cap 332, which requires every alien holding a valid immigration facility to register with NIRA.

The term **“alien”** is defined under both the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, Cap 313 and the Registration of Persons Act, Cap 332 as a person who is not a citizen of Uganda.

An **“alien's identification card”** means an alien's identification card issued under the Registration of Persons Act Cap 332.

The requirement applies to all foreign nationals lawfully residing in Uganda under valid immigration facilities, including holders of work permits, certificates of residence, special passes, student passes, and dependant passes. The requirement does not extend to visitors whose stay in Uganda does not exceed ninety (90) days.

3 Rationale for the Registration Exercise

The registration exercise reflects the Government's policy objective of strengthening the administration and regulation of foreign nationals residing within Uganda. As a sovereign state, Uganda maintains a legitimate interest in identifying persons within its territory and maintaining accurate records relating to their immigration status.

From a security perspective, the collection of biometric information enhances identity verification, facilitates traceability, and supports law enforcement efforts in addressing security concerns. The exercise also enables the Government to maintain accurate demographic information, which may inform planning and policy development in areas such as infrastructure, public services, healthcare, taxation, and labour regulation.

4 Registration Procedure

Pursuant to Regulation 11 of the Registration of Persons Regulations, 2015, registration must be **undertaken in person** at a designated NIRA registration centre nearest to the applicant's place of residence.

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a. Confirmation of Eligibility

The applicant must confirm that he or she holds a valid immigration facility, such as a work permit, student pass, or dependent pass, as well as a valid passport.

b. Completion of the Application Form

The applicant must complete Form 4, being the prescribed Application for Registration of Aliens under Regulation 10 and Schedule 2 of the Registration of Persons Regulations, 2015.

c. Payment of the Prescribed Fee

The applicant must pay the prescribed registration fee of USD 100 through the Uganda Revenue Authority payment system and obtain the corresponding payment slip as proof of payment.

d. Submission of the Application

The applicant must appear in person at the designated NIRA registration centre and submit the completed application form together with the required supporting documentation and proof of payment.

e. Verification by NIRA

NIRA will verify the applicant's particulars, supporting documentation, and biometric information.

f. Registration and Issuance of an Alien Identification Card

Upon successful verification, NIRA will enter the applicant's details into the National Identification Register and issue an Alien Identification Card bearing a unique Alien Identification Number.

5 Validity and Renewal of the Alien Identification Card

The Registration of Persons Regulations, 2015 provide that an Alien Identification Card remains valid for the same period as the immigration facility held by the cardholder.

An application for renewal must be made to NIRA in the prescribed form and accompanied by proof of payment of the applicable renewal fees. It is important to note that the Alien Identification Card remains the property of the Government of Uganda at all times and is issued solely for the lawful use of the registered holder.

6 Post-Registration Compliance

Registration is not limited to the issuance of an Alien Identification Card. Following registration, the cardholder assumes certain continuing obligations under the law.

A registered alien is required to produce the Alien Identification Card within seven days whenever requested to do so by a registration officer or other authorised official. The card must also be surrendered to NIRA or the nearest police station where the holder permanently departs Uganda, acquires Ugandan citizenship, or upon the death of the cardholder.

Where the card is lost, damaged, or destroyed, the cardholder is required to promptly report the matter to NIRA or the nearest police station and provide details regarding the circumstances of the loss or damage. NIRA may issue a temporary document pending replacement and, where the original card is not recovered within one month, a replacement card may be issued in accordance with the applicable procedures.



7 Consequences of Non-Compliance

The registration exercise creates a legal obligation for all qualifying foreign nationals residing in Uganda. Failure to register constitutes a contravention of the Registration of Persons Act, Cap 332 and may have implications for an individual's immigration status and continued lawful residence within the country.

A person who fails to comply with the statutory requirements may, upon conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding Uganda Shillings Two Million Four Hundred Thousand (UGX 2,400,000), imprisonment, or both, as prescribed under the applicable legislation.

Given the increasing integration of identity verification requirements across both public and private sector transactions, failure to obtain an Alien Identification Card may also create practical difficulties in accessing services and conducting various transactions within Uganda.

8 Key Practical Implications

Beyond satisfying a legal requirement, registration is expected to facilitate participation in a broad range of transactions that require formal identification and verification. Possession of an Alien Identification Card may be relevant in relation to the opening and operation of personal bank accounts, acquisition of insurance products, land related transactions where permitted by law, pension related transactions, social security arrangements, health insurance schemes, consumer credit transactions, tax registration and compliance, SIM card registration, registration of business entities, and applications for government services, approvals, permits, licences, and benefits.

The Alien Identification Card is therefore expected to become an increasingly important document for foreign nationals seeking to live, work, study, invest, or conduct business in Uganda.

Conclusion.

The commencement of mandatory alien registration marks a significant development in Uganda's immigration and identification framework. Foreign nationals holding valid immigration facilities should take steps to ensure compliance with the registration requirements and obtain an Alien Identification Card within the prescribed timelines.

In addition to mitigating the risk of regulatory sanctions, timely registration will facilitate access to a growing range of services and transactions that depend on formal identification and verification. Employers, educational institutions, investors, and foreign nationals residing in Uganda are therefore encouraged to assess their compliance obligations and take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the requirements established under the Registration of Persons Act and the Registration of Persons Regulations, 2015.

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