

Government Reforms Legal Framework for Issuance, Renewal and Extension of Passports

By Holland & Knight

The Venezuelan Government issued on March 22, 2021, Presidential Decree 4,571 (Decree), by means of which it partially regulated the Decree with the Status, Validity and Force of Law for the Reform of the Organic Law of Identification regarding the Issuance, Renewal and Extension of Passports, which will become effective as of April 15, 2021.

The purpose of the Decree is to establish the rules that will regulate the issuance, renewal and extension of Venezuelan passports, and according to the Decree, it pursues the following purposes:

1. guarantee transparency in the process of issuance, renewal and extension of Venezuelan passports
2. guarantee every person's right to identification and public identity documents abroad
3. ensure that all people meet the necessary conditions for the effective exercise of the right to free passage

One of the principal measures implemented in this Decree is that new passports issued to people over 18 years of age will be valid for a 10-year term from the issuance date. The authorities may only issue a one-time extensions of these passports for a five-year term. The previous passport legal framework established that passports were valid for five-year terms and could only be extended for a single term of two years.

It is important to mention that passports and extensions issued before April 15, 2021, will remain in force until their expiration. Extensions to passports may be provided for a two-year term as established in the previous passport legislation.

With respect to minors, the passports issued after April 15, 2021:

1. shall be valid for three years for minors under 3 years of age
2. shall be valid for five years for minors older than 3 years of age and younger than 18 years of age

According to Article 25, passports must be issued within 30 business days after "*the date the passport is paid and the facial registry is carried out*" of the respective applicant.

Likewise, the Decree established in Article 30 the events in which the validity of the passports may not be extended or renewed:

1. when passports have been issued to minors who are 9 years of age and younger
2. when the passport's physical condition does not allow the extension of its use



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