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Uncle Sam



Israeli passport
Photo: Ata Awisat

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Israeli tourists may enter US without visa

New US legislation will eliminate need for visa for Israeli tourists wishing to enter US for three months or less. Israel to join 38 other countries with same prerogative

Yitzhak Benhorin

WASHINGTON - [Israeli](#) tourists traveling to the United States for a period of three months or less may soon be able to do so without an entry visa.

The US is currently working on an amendment to its visa protocol which would allow for 12 states to be added to the 27 whose citizens do not need visas to enter the US.

So far, all of Israel's efforts to exempt Israeli tourists from the lengthy process of obtaining a US visa have failed, due to the US criteria saying that only countries which had less than a third of their applications denied may be included on the list.

The US Congress is said to vote on new security legislation, which allows for countries that had 10% or less of their applications denied to be included on the list.

Should Congress approve this amendment Israel could easily qualify for the list, since only 3% of Israeli visa applications are denied each year.

Israel is expected to easily meet additional US demands, such as divulging passenger lists, using biometric passports – which include fingerprints – and meeting strict security protocols.

The security protocols at the Ben Gurion International Airport are up to US code and Israel is expected to be one of the first nations world-wide to begin using biometric passports.

The change in visa protocol is part of a wider amendment in US homeland security legislation brought before Congress. The amendment is expected to pass and get presidential confirmation, affectively branding it a law.

Sources in Washington told Ynet Monday that even after the new legislation is approved, implementation is still several months away.

Cooperation

Shin Bet to upgrade security in LA Airport / Itamar Eichner

Los Angeles International Airport invites team of security experts from Shin Bet, Ben Gurion Airport to examine airport's security arrangements. Israeli team leaves six suggestions for improving LA Airport security. Consul general in Los Angeles: This is unprecedented project of cooperation

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