

REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

BILL FOR THE
PASSPORT (AMENDMENT)
ACT NO. OF 2025

Explanatory Note

This Bill amends the Passport Act No. 20 of 2009 (“the Act”).

The Government is committed to modernizing the processing and issuance of passports and all travel documents to ensure compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requirements. These amendments will enhance security measures and introduce stricter protocols to prevent fraud, identity theft, and misuse of passports, which will strengthen national security.

The Government recognises the importance of issuing diplomatic passports in accordance with the Vienna Convention, as this will protect the integrity and enhance trust in the Vanuatu passport at international borders.

Since 2024, the Government has upgraded the Vanuatu biometric passport to an electronic passport system. To further this effort, the Government recognises that it is essential to establish a committee responsible for reviewing and developing the next series of Vanuatu passports.

Given the sensitive issues surrounding Vanuatu passports, the Government further recognises the importance of collecting biometric data from Vanuatu citizens and the need for data protection of the biometric data collected. The proposed changes will outline the specific uses of biometric data collected through the new passport system, ensuring information collected is kept confidential to prevent identity fraud and deter illegal activities.

These changes are expected to restore trust and confidence in the Vanuatu passport, resulting in a positive long-term impact on the country's economy.

Minister of Internal Affairs



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Arrangement of Sections

1	Amendment	2
2	Commencement.....	2

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BILL FOR THE PASSPORT (AMENDMENT) ACT NO. OF 2025

An Act to amend the Passport Act No. 20 of 2009.

Be it enacted by the President and Parliament as follows-

1 Amendment

The Passport Act No. 20 of 2009 is amended as set out in the Schedule.

2 Commencement

This Act commences on the day on which it is published in the Gazette.

SCHEDULE

AMENDMENTS OF THE PASSPORT ACT NO. 20 OF 2009

1 At the end of Part 1

Add

“3A Passport Committee

- (1) The Passport Committee is established.
- (2) The Committee consists of the following members appointed by the Minister:
 - (a) 2 representatives of the Department of the Vanuatu Immigration and Passport Services; and
 - (b) a representative of the Department of Finance; and
 - (c) a representative of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre; and
 - (d) a representative of the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs; and
 - (e) a representative of the Vanuatu Christian Council; and
 - (f) a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and
 - (g) a representative of the Minister.
- (3) A member of the Committee is to hold office for a period of 5 years.
- (4) The Minister is appoint a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee from amongst its members.
- (5) The Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson are to hold office for a period of 5 years.

3B Functions of the Committee

The Committee has the following functions:

- (a) to develop and review the series of passports and to develop security features of passports; and
- (b) to ensure the technical design of the new passport series is in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization standards.

3C Meetings of the Committee

- (1) The Committee is to meet once a month and may hold such other meetings as are necessary for the proper performance of its functions under this Act.
- (2) The Chairperson is to preside at all meetings of the Committee and in his or her absence, the Deputy Chairperson is to preside at these meetings.
- (3) The Department of Vanuatu Immigration and Passport Services is the secretariat of the Committee.
- (4) The quorum of the Committee is 5 members of the Committee present at the meeting, including the Chairperson or in the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson.
- (5) A member present at a meeting of the Committee has one vote and issues arising at a meeting are to be decided by a majority of votes.
- (6) If the voting at the meeting is equal, the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson (if he or she is presiding at the meeting) has a casting vote.
- (7) Subject to this Act, the Committee may determine and regulate its own procedures.”

2 At the end of paragraph 10(1)(i)

Insert

“(iii) is listed on the Interpol alert list; or”

2 Subsection 25(1)

Delete “approved by the Minister”

3 After subsection 28(1)

Insert

“(1A) Without limiting subsection (1), the Regulations may provide for the following matters:

- (a) biometric data and the manner in which such data is to be collected, kept and maintained; and
- (b) the method of application including electronic application for passports; and
- (c) sharing of information relating to passports including:
 - (i) the process of sharing these information with other agencies and the approval required when sharing these information; and
 - (ii) persons who are entitled to share these information; and
 - (iii) the types of information that may be shared; and
 - (iv) the form in which information may be shared; and
- (d) the storage and warehouse administrator and the process storage of passport including:
 - (i) the storage of blank passport booklets; and
 - (ii) the process of handling blank passport booklets from the warehouse to production; and
 - (iii) documentation and maintainance of inventory and accurate records; and
 - (iv) other processes for the secure storage and handling of all passports before being issued; and

- (e) the process for destroying passports by the electronic passport system and the process for the physical destruction of other passports; and
- (f) prescribe penalties not exceeding VT5,000,000 or a term of imprisonment of not more than 5 year, or both, for offences against the Regulations.”

4 Subsection 28(2)

Delete “The”, insert “Subject to subsection (3), the”

5 At the end of section 28

Add

- “(3) The Minister must not amend Schedule 1 unless that amendment is necessary to provide for a person entitled to hold a diplomatic passport under the Vienna Convention.”