

Israel Authorities Reevaluating Blockage of Visas for ICEJ Clergy

The future of a major evangelical organization operating in Israel for more than 40 years could be threatened by government bureaucrats. That's because its workers have been blocked from obtaining visas.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem told Israeli media the government rejected their request for clergy visas because it determined the ICEJ no longer qualifies as a "religious institution."

ICEJ Vice President David Parsons told CBN News, "We've faced about a three-year period now, because of COVID, because of five elections in 3 1/2 years, mid-level bureaucrats and a lot of these [government] ministries have been free to make their own decisions without proper supervision from above—from people who sort of see the wider picture of, say, the Christian support for Israel—how strategic it is for the Jewish state."

Parsons says certain government employees with a bias against Christians are trying to squeeze them out of all visa categories for remaining in the country, including for clergy, work and volunteer.

"Going forward long term, it would be hard to operate under these conditions," Parsons explained. "We have been told for 3 1/2 years that it's under review. But in the meantime, we've just been whittled away to where we finally went public with it."

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings,

Charisma videos & more!

After the dispute became public, the Interior Ministry's Population and Immigration Authority, responsible for providing visas, gave a statement regarding the situation. It stated:

"This issue has been discussed in the past. The new head of the Population and Immigration Authority, Eyal Sisú, is expected to reevaluate the issue, and decisions will be taken in accordance with the law and regulations, taking into account diplomatic considerations, Israel's relations with religious and other organizations, and other relevant considerations."

Just days later, that agency's chief of staff notified ICEJ's attorney that the visa policy is under review, and they would soon reach an understanding.

According to The Jerusalem Post, the issue has also been brought before the "highest levels of the Israeli government."

The ICEJ first registered as a nonprofit organization in 1980, with the approval of then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Its mandate: to encourage Christians worldwide to stand with Israel and the Jewish people.

For the rest of this article, visit our content partners at .
{eo}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Reprinted with permission from . Copyright © 2023 The Christian Broadcasting Network Inc. All rights reserved.