Government passes draft law amending rules on removals

On 19 March 2026, the Council of Ministers adopted a new draft law amending the rules governing the entry, stay, departure and removal of foreign nationals from the national territory, as well as on the rules on asylum, refugees and protection. Some of the main measures of the draft law foresee the strengthening of the roles of the authorities, centralising the return process within the UNEF-PSP (Public Security Police) and introducing new coercive measures as alternatives to detention, such as the surrender of travel documents or the provision of a security deposit.

Detention remains a last resort but is now subject to a broader framework to ensure the system's effectiveness.

The draft law also includes:

- Extension of detention periods from 60 days to up to 360 days in the context of a removal order, and a provision allowing 180 days for the order to be enforced, thereby giving more time to ensure the effective return of the individual;
- Coordination of the removal regime with the asylum system: the submission of an application for international protection no longer automatically suspends removal proceedings, which will now proceed in parallel;
- Extension of the periods during which entry into Portugal is prohibited following a compulsory removal.

Source(s)

- Government of Portugal | Governo de Portugal (23 March, 2026), Governo aprova lei que reforça afastamento coercivo de imigrantes ilegais [Government passes law strengthening the compulsory removal of illegal immigrants], https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc25/comunicacao/noticia?i=governo-aprova-lei-que-reforca-afastamento-coercivo-de-imigrantes-ilegais
- Government of Portugal | Governo de Portugal (19 March, 2026), Comunicado do Conselho de Ministros de 19 de março de 2026 [Statement of Council of Ministers of 19 March 2026],

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https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc25/governo/comunicado-do-conselho-de-ministros?i=718

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