

Siam Legal Phuket Advises Foreign Buyers on Legal Framework for Thai Property Ownership as Phuket Draws Record International Investment

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Siam Legal Phuket, a Thailand-based full-service law firm with more than 20 years of operation, is providing guidance for international property buyers following a significant rise in overseas investor inquiries for Phuket real estate, driven by geopolitical instability and a growing appetite for asset diversification outside the Gulf Cooperation Council region.

Thailand's condominium market recorded a 2.2% increase in foreign ownership in 2025, with foreign condominium purchases in the fourth quarter rising 9.3% compared with the same period in 2024, according to property data agency Juwai IQI. Much of this activity has been concentrated in Phuket, which ranks as the third most popular destination in Thailand for Chinese buyer inquiries in 2026, behind Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Industry analysts report a marked increase in interest from affluent Middle Eastern buyers, with demand concentrated in premium condominiums and luxury villas priced at 50 million baht and above, particularly in the Bang Tao, Laguna, and Cherng Talay corridors on Phuket's northwest coast, according to the Thai

Condominium Association.

Felix Desjardins, Head of Acquisitions for Phuket and Koh Samui at List Sotheby's International Realty Thailand, described a "Dubai-Phuket corridor" that is becoming increasingly established, with internationally mobile buyers now viewing Phuket as a lifestyle and portfolio allocation decision rather than a speculative purchase. The Cherng Talay area has seen particularly strong demand, driven in part by a sustained wave of Russian buyers, and the Bang Tao and Cherng Talay corridor has emerged as the primary focus for new villa and branded residence supply on the island.

Industry observers have highlighted Phuket's structural advantages relative to competing international destinations. In Singapore, foreign buyers face approximately 60% additional buyer stamp duty. In Bali, foreign buyers are generally limited to leasehold structures of around 30 years with limited title security. Phuket offers freehold condominium ownership and a more established legal framework for long-term leasehold villa arrangements, a distinction that analysts have described as a key factor for buyers evaluating long-term ownership and investment security across Southeast Asia.

"International buyers are drawn to Phuket's combination of lifestyle appeal and legal ownership structures that compare favourably against competing markets. However, the legal framework governing property acquisition in Phuket has specific conditions, particularly in the villa and beachfront segments, that require thorough verification before any commitment is made," said Omar O Manee, Siam Legal Phuket representative.

Siam Legal Phuket notes that foreign nationals may hold freehold ownership of condominium units in Thailand on the condition that the total foreign-owned share within any given building does not exceed 49% of the total floor space. In Phuket's most active condominium zones, including developments along the Cherng Talay and Kamala corridors, several buildings are at or near this threshold. Buyers should verify the current foreign ownership ratio before signing any reservation agreement, as quota limits cannot be waived and units in excess of the limit cannot be registered in a foreign name.

For villa purchases, the firm notes that freehold land ownership is not available to foreign nationals under Thai law. The standard structure for foreign villa buyers in Phuket is a registered 30-year leasehold, which may include renewal options depending on how the agreement is drafted. Siam Legal Phuket advises that the quality of the leasehold agreement varies significantly between developers and that buyers should have the lease reviewed by an independent lawyer before proceeding.

The firm also advises that land title verification is a critical step in Phuket, specifically. Hillside and beachfront properties in areas such as Rawai, Nai Harn, and parts of Kamala have historically carried Nor Sor 3 Gor titles rather than full Chanote title deeds. Nor Sor 3 Gor titles carry boundary uncertainty and are generally

not accepted by Thai banks as mortgage security. Chanote title is the preferred standard. A licensed surveyor and independent legal review are both recommended before any villa purchase, particularly in coastal or elevated locations.

International buyers establishing a long-term base in Phuket may also benefit from reviewing visa options aligned with their residency goals. The Long-Term Resident Visa, or LTR, provides a 10-year visa for qualifying high-income professionals, remote workers, and retirees. The Thailand Privilege Visa offers long-term access of 5 to 20 years without employment or income requirements and has seen significant uptake among buyers in Phuket's luxury villa segment. The Destination Thailand Visa, or DTV, is available to remote workers and provides 180-day stays per entry with a 5-year validity. Each carries its own eligibility conditions and requires a separate application.

Siam Legal Phuket assists foreign buyers, investors, and individuals with property transactions, due diligence, and legal compliance across Phuket and the surrounding region. Buyers currently evaluating property in Bang Tao, Cherng Talay, Kamala, Rawai, or other parts of Phuket may benefit from consulting a property lawyer in Phuket to understand the full scope of their ownership rights before committing to a purchase.

Siam Legal Phuket is a Thailand-based law firm serving foreign nationals, investors, property buyers, and expatriates in Phuket and the surrounding region. The firm provides legal services in property law, immigration, company formation, criminal defense, and related matters.

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Siam Legal Phuket

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