

# INTERNATIONAL STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

**This list of the Statute of Limitations in countries worldwide is provided by the law firm of Thomas Kalperis International, Inc. These statutes pertain to commercial debt collections unless otherwise noted.**

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***\* Indicates Revisions***



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Thomas G. J. Kalperis, ESQ. has been practicing law since 1997. He was the head of the International Department of a Boston law firm, before opening up his own practice in 2001.

Thomas Kalperis International, Inc. is staffed by a qualified multi-lingual group of eight individuals, two of whom have Juris Doctorate degrees.

The firm is located on lovely Cape Cod, and is about 70 miles from Boston.

For more information on Thomas Kalperis International, Inc., please visit the firm's website at [www.kalperis.com](http://www.kalperis.com).

## THE NATIONAL LIST® OF ATTORNEYS

	International Statute of Limitations *Applies to commercial claims only unless otherwise noted
<b>ANGUILLA</b>	4 Years
<b>ANTIGUA</b>	6 Years
<b>ARGENTINA</b>	10 Years, normally, however, statute of limitations for civil cases varies depending on the case
<b>ARMENIA</b>	3 Years
<b>ARUBA</b>	5 Years, but the period of limitation can be stopped by sending letters for collections continually. The debt will be kept alive in this way.
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	6 Years, generally, up to 12 years in some specific circumstances
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	* 3 Years for commercial; 30 years for all bank loans.
<b>AZERBAIJAN</b>	10 Years
<b>BAHAMAS</b>	6 Years
<b>BAHRAIN</b>	10 Years for commercial; all other civil cases are 15 years
<b>BANGLADESH</b>	3 Years
<b>BARBADOS</b>	6 Years, however, for specialty contracts there is a shorter time period.
<b>BELARUS</b>	3 years with a few specific exceptions
<b>BELGIUM</b>	10 Years, generally (90% of the time but there are exceptions). A debt due by the government is 5 Years.
<b>BERMUDA</b>	Statute differs greatly depending on the type of case.
<b>BENIN</b>	30 Years
<b>BONAIRE</b>	5 Years
<b>BRAZIL</b>	10 Years
<b>BRITISH GUIANA</b>	4 Years
<b>BULGARIA</b>	Statute of Limitation rules for civil cases in Bulgaria varies. It all depends on the type of case. To answer the question one needs more information on the type of case. There is no general rule.
<b>CAMBODIA</b>	5 Years

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<b>CAMEROON</b>	6 Years
<b>CAYMAN ISLAND</b>	6 Years
<b>CHILE</b>	5 Years, generally, however, the time frame limit to intent a civil action will be determined by the nature of the document containing the debt.
<b>CHINA</b>	4 Years, generally, unless otherwise stipulated by law.
<b>COLUMBIA</b>	5 Years, generally. For debts incorporated in negotiable instruments – 3 years. For bounced or bad checks usually 2 years.
<b>COSTA RICA</b>	4 Years, retail and most other civil cases are 10 years.
<b>CROATIA</b>	3 Years
<b>CURACAO</b>	5 Years
<b>CYPRUS</b>	Cyprus does not have a “blanket” Statute of Limitations for all civil cases. Depending on the nature of the case, the Statute of Limitations can range from 6 months to 15 Years.
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	There is no expiration date. The creditor still keeps the claim, i.e. he/she can prosecute the claim in court. At the same time, the debtor is still obliged to fulfill his obligation. On the basis of the statute-barred claim, a right of the debtor is created to plead limitation. The judge shall take the statute of limitation into consideration only upon an objection of the debtor. If the debtor appeals to the statute of limitation, the statute-limitation right cannot be awarded to the creditor.
<b>DENMARK</b>	5 Years
<b>DOMINICA</b>	4 Years
<b>ECUADOR</b>	5 Years if debt has mortgage agreement as guaranty. 3 Years if debt has only a promissory note or bill exchange.
<b>EGYPT</b>	For the commercial demand of payment case type, it takes 5 years For the personal demand of payment case type, it takes 15 years For compensation case type, it takes 3 years
<b>ERITREA (AFRICA)</b>	10 Years
<b>ESTONIA</b>	* 10 Years, but a party can appeal to the Court to protect one’s violated or disputed rights, regardless of limitations. Once a judgment is obtained, there is a limitations period of 10 years in which to collect a debt.
<b>FINLAND</b>	* 10 Years commercial claims; 3 years retail. Judgments are valid for 10 years only .
<b>FRANCE</b>	* 10 Years for commercial, 2 years retail, unless there is a contract or an acknowledgement of debt that is signed by the debtor.

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<b>GABON</b>	Under the Gabonese constitution, the state of limitations depends on the crime involved.
<b>GERMANY</b>	*4 Years commercial; 2 years retail or consumer.
<b>GHANA</b>	6 Years
<b>GREECE</b>	5 Years
<b>GRENADA</b>	4 Years
<b>GUADELOUPE</b>	None
<b>GUATEMALA</b>	Guatemalan legislation has a Napoleonic code and a commercial code. The terms and conditions of each one applies whether a contract relation is entered among two persons not engaged in business activities (Napoleonic code) and if it is entered among at least one natural or any form of business association (commercial code).
<b>GUINEA</b>	Articles 784 related to real estate and Article 794 in Common Laws in the Guinean Civil Code stipulate 30 years for a party to bring suit against another party in a civil case. However, the judiciary in Guinea is not mature so this may or may not mirror actual practice.
<b>GUYANA</b>	4 Years
<b>HONG KONG</b>	6 Years for claims in contract and tort is 6 years from the date of the breach of contract or of the tortuous act.
<b>HUNGARY</b>	* 5 Years commercial; 5 years retail. Parties can agree for a shorter period of limitations, but agreement must be in writing. Prescription period only begins from the date of the maturation of the claim in question.
<b>INDONESIA</b>	<p>The Indonesian Civil Code (ICC) is considered as a statute for the parties who intend to enter into an agreement. The parties have reached an agreement if they comply with requirements as provisioned in Article 1320 of ICC, as follows:</p> <p>For the legality of an agreement, the following requirements shall be fulfilled:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mutually agreed by the parties;</li> <li>2. Both parties are legally capable to enter an agreement;</li> <li>3. It should cover a particular object;</li> <li>4. A lawful cause.</li> </ol> <p>Article 1338 paragraph (1) of ICC stipulates further All agreements that are legally made shall apply as the law between the parties thereto . The article also means that the parties are free to enter into a contract as long as it is not against the prevailing law and regulations.</p>
<b>ICELAND</b>	4 Years
<b>ISRAEL</b>	The prescription period in the case of a claim not relating to land is 7 Years, but in the case of a claim relating to land is 15-25 years.

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<b>IRELAND</b>	6 Years
<b>ISRAEL</b>	7 Years
<b>ITALY</b>	10 Years
<b>JAMAICA</b>	4 Years
<b>JAPAN</b>	3 Years for Civil Cases
<b>KENYA</b>	6 Years
<b>KOREA</b>	10 Years Civil Matters, 5 Years contract between merchants
<b>KUWAIT</b>	10 Years
<b>LATVIA</b>	10 Years
<b>LEBANON</b>	10 Years, generally
<b>LITHUANIA</b>	10 Years
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	30 Years
<b>MALAWI</b>	6 Years
<b>MALAYSIA</b>	3-6 Years
<b>MALDIVES ISLAND</b>	None
<b>MANITOBA</b>	6 Years
<b>MONTSERRAT</b>	4 Years
<b>NICARAGUA</b>	10 years for debts, interest on debt is 3 years
<b>NIGERIA</b>	6 Years
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	5 Years
<b>NETHERLAND ANTILLES</b>	Varies from 1-20 Years
<b>NIGERIA</b>	6 Years
<b>NORWAY</b>	* 3 Years, but the period can be renewed by a promissory note. 10 years to collect debt after judgment.
<b>ONTARIO</b>	2 Years

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<b>PAKISTAN</b>	3 Years
<b>PHILIPPINES</b>	10 Years for written contracts, 5 Years for oral contracts and 4 Years for fraud
<b>POLAND</b>	3 Years commercial, but General Polish Civil code 10 years
<b>QUEBEC</b>	3 Years
<b>RUSSIA</b>	3 Years
<b>RWANDA</b>	None
<b>SAINT KITTS &amp; NEVIS</b>	4 Years
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>	4 Years
<b>SAINT VINCENT &amp; GRENADINES</b>	4 Years
<b>SAIPAN</b>	6 Years
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	5 Years
<b>SINGAPORE</b>	6 Years
<b>SLOVAKIA</b>	4 Years
<b>SOMALIA</b>	At this time there is no diplomat relations
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	The Statute of Limitations (Prescription Act) is generally 3 years from the date on which a debt arises. The date on which the debt arises can in some cases be determined with reference to the claimant's knowledge of the facts and circumstances, rather than the date of the incident-giving rise to the claim.
<b>SPAIN</b>	1-15 Years, it depends and varies
<b>SURINAME</b>	5 Years
<b>SWEDEN</b>	10 Years
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	10 Years
<b>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</b>	4 Years
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	3 years
<b>TURKEY</b>	10 Years

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<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	3 Years
<b>UGANDA: (AFRICA)</b>	10 Years
<b>U.K.</b>	Statute of Limitations can be anything up to 12 years depending on the type of civil case.
<b>UNITED ARAB EMIRATES</b>	10 Years
<b>VENEZUELA</b>	The statute of limitation is up to 10 years for bringing lawsuits or actions against debtors.
<b>VIETNAM</b>	<p>If there is no specific statute of limitations set out in specialized legislation, the limitation period for a civil case is determined as follows: (i) if a dispute occurred prior to 1 January 2005--the effective date of the Law on Civil Procedure--the limitation period is two years commencing from 1 January 2005; (ii) if the dispute arose on or after 1 January 2005, the limitation period is two years from the date on which the lawful rights and interests of an individual or entity are infringed.</p> <p>In a normal debt-related case, the date which triggers the statute of limitation is the date on which the debtor's obligation to repay the debt under the agreement with its creditor became due, but was not honored or from the point at when due dates might have been reasonably extended.</p>
<b>WALES</b>	6 Years
<b>ZIMBABWE</b>	3 Years