

Global Immigration alert

December 2025

United States

White House proclamation announces new travel restrictions

Executive summary

On 4 June 2025, President Donald Trump issued a proclamation announcing restrictions on certain foreign nationals entering the United States. The travel restrictions, which went into effect on 9 June, had fully or partially limited visa issuance and entry to the United States for nationals from several countries based on "identity-management or information-sharing inadequacies" of those governments.

On 16 December 2025, President Trump issued a new proclamation modifying the list, including the addition of several countries that will now be subjected to full or partial restrictions. These restrictions will take effect on 1 January 2026 at 12:01 am EST.

Background

The proclamation follows the report directed by Executive Order 14161, "Protecting the United States From Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats," which the president signed on 20 January 2025. This order directed the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, Attorney General, and Director of National Intelligence, to submit a report identifying countries "for which vetting and screening information is so deficient as to warrant a full or partial suspension on the admission of nationals from those countries" to the United States.

Based on the report submitted to the president on 9 April 2025 and "foreign policy, national security, and counterterrorism goals . . . [as well as other] . . . various factors, including each country's screening and vetting

capabilities, information sharing policies, and country-specific risk factors," the president had previously identified 19 countries for which to restrict and limit (either full or partial) entry into the United States.

The December proclamation directs the Secretary of State and other named officials to submit a report within 180 days of the proclamation, and every 180 days thereafter, to assess, review, and recommend if the restrictions "should be continued, terminated, modified, or supplemented."

Analysis

The administration has modified the list to identify 19 countries for full restriction on the entry of nationals from these countries to the United States. The restrictions apply to both entry of immigrants and nonimmigrants from the following countries:

Original list:

- Afghanistan
- Burma
- Chad
- Republic of Congo
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Haiti
- Iran
- Libya
- Somalia
- Sudan

- Yemen

Newly added:

- Burkina Faso
- Laos (previously only partially restricted)
- Mali
- Niger
- Sierra Leone (previously only partially restricted)
- South Sudan
- Syria

The administration is also suspending the entry of nonimmigrants and immigrants who travel on Palestinian Authority travel documents.

Twenty countries have been identified for partial restriction on the entry of nationals from these countries to the United States. The following countries remain subject to such restriction:

- Burundi
- Cuba
- Togo
- Turkmenistan (only restricts immigrants under the new proclamation)
- Venezuela

Newly added:

- Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Benin
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Dominica
- Gabon
- The Gambia
- Malawi
- Mauritania
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Tanzania
- Tonga
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Partial restrictions apply to nonimmigrants of these countries seeking entry in the following visa categories: B-1/B-2 (business visitors/tourists), F (students), M (vocational training), and J (exchange visitors). Consular officers are also directed to reduce the validity for any other nonimmigrant visa issued to nationals of the above countries "to the extent permitted by law."

Exceptions

The proclamation only applies to foreign nationals of the designated countries who are outside the United States on or after the date of issuance, 16 December 2025, and do not have a valid visa as of 16 December. Further, the travel restrictions will not apply to lawful permanent residents of the United States, dual citizens who hold a passport from a country that is not listed, and certain visa categories:

- Diplomats and employees of international organizations and NATO
- Athletes or members of an athletic team, including coaches, persons performing a necessary support role, and immediate relatives, traveling for the World Cup, Olympics, or other major sporting event as determined by the Secretary of State
- Special Immigrant Visas for United States Government employees
- Immigrant visas for ethnic and religious minorities facing persecution in Iran

Furthermore, the proclamation exempts individuals whose entry to the United States serves a "critical national interest," which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The proclamation does not revoke visas issued before its effective date and will not apply to individuals granted asylum or refugee status if already admitted to the United States, or limit the ability to seek asylum, refugee status, withholding from removal, or protection under the Convention Against Torture.

What this means

US employers may wish to determine if they have any employees that are citizens from the above-noted countries and review their current immigration status and potential impacts to their work authorization or ability to travel internationally with an immigration professional. Individuals from the listed countries should reassess any international travel plans that would have them scheduled to return to the United States after the 1 January 2026 effective date if they are not included in the proclamation's exceptions.

Developments in this space are likely to remain fluid as it is possible that this latest action faces legal challenges. We will continue to monitor and share future developments. For additional information, or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact your EY Law LLP professional or Mehlman Jacobs LLP professional.

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