

Issuance of Immigrant Visas for 75 Countries on Pause by the State Department

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Effective January 21, 2026, the U.S. Department of State announced that it will indefinitely pause **all immigrant visa** issuances for applicants from 75 specific countries the Department deems are “at high risk of public benefits usage.” Immigrant visas allow holders to enter the U.S. as lawful permanent residents (i.e. green card holders).

During the pause, the Department stated that it will conduct “a full review of all policies, regulations, and guidance to ensure that immigrants from these high-risk countries do not utilize welfare in the United States or become a public charge¹.”

The countries affected by the pause include Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, The Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Republic of the Congo, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

The Department also notes that dual nationals applying with a valid passport of a country that is not listed above are exempt from this pause. Further, immigrant visa applicants who are nationals of the affected countries may continue to submit visa applications and attend interviews while the State Department continues to schedule interview appointments. But no immigrant visas will be issued during the pause to these specific nationals.

More importantly, the pause is specific to **immigrant visas only** and does not affect nonimmigrant visas, such as the tourist visa and H-1b temporary worker visa, etc.

Related People

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¹ INA 212(a)(4), 8 USC 1182(a)(4) provides in general that, "Any alien who, in the opinion of the consular officer at the time of application for a visa, or in the opinion of the Attorney General at the time of application for admission or adjustment of status, is likely at any time to become a public charge is inadmissible."