

Immigration Alert

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Pause on U.S. Immigrant Visa Issuance for 75 Countries

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As immigration policy changes continue, the [U.S. Department of State's announcement](#) of a pause on immigrant visa issuance starting January 21, 2026 for nationals from 75 countries has raised questions.

Who is Impacted?

Foreign nationals born in one of the following 75 countries who are applying for U.S. immigrant visas at U.S. consular posts outside of the U.S. are impacted by the pause.

Foreign nationals born in one of the 75 countries listed, and holding valid citizenship documented by a valid passport in a second country NOT listed (i.e. dual citizenship), are exempt from the pause and are not impacted.

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.

What Does “U.S. Immigrant Visa” Include?

U.S. immigrant visas are specific visas for permanently relocating to the United States. U.S. immigrant visas, as they are defined in the law and as they are referred to in this policy change, do NOT include ANY non-immigrant visas, such as F-1 visas, J-1 visas, L-1 visas, O-1 visas, H-1B visas, TN visas, B-1/B-2 visas, R-1 visas, E-1 visas, E-2 visas, E-3 visas, among others. Foreign nationals born in one of the 75 countries listed above can still apply for, and be issued, non-immigrant visas to travel to the United States, as long as they are eligible for the non-immigrant visa type and are not affected by the [June 2025](#) and [December 2025](#) travel bans.

Further, U.S. immigrant visas are processed through U.S. consular posts outside of the U.S. and do NOT include I-485 Adjustment of Status petitions filed with and processed by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services within the United States. While U.S. immigrant visas and I-485 Adjustment of Status petitions are both processes for green card issuance, there is a distinction in how these processes run depending on whether the foreign national applicant is IN the United States on a valid visa status or OUTSIDE of the United States and applying through a U.S. consular post in their home country.

At this time, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has not issued a corresponding pause on I-485 Adjustment of Status petitions. I-485 Adjustment of Status petitions are not currently impacted by this policy change. We are monitoring updates closely.

What is Paused?

Immigrant visa issuance is paused. This means that applicants from the 75 countries listed above can still proceed in filing an immigrant visa application (if eligible) and attending the required interview. The final step of the issuance of the immigrant visa is paused under this change.

Immigrant visas already issued can still be used to immigrate and permanently relocate to the United States. This pause does NOT invalidate or revoke issued immigrant visas.

When Does This Pause Go Into Effect?

This pause is effective starting on January 21, 2026. The U.S. Department of State has not released information on how long it expects the pause to remain in place.

CONTACT

U.S. immigrations policies are changing rapidly and we continue to focus on understanding how these changes impact our clients. If you would like guidance or have questions regarding visa issuance, please contact [Allison Ahern Fillo](#) or [Emily Tanji](#) in our [Immigration Law Practice](#).