

International Student Resource Center

U.S. Expansion of Travel Restricted Countries

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16 December 2025

Background:
The U.S. imposed full travel restrictions on citizens from 12 countries under Presidential Proclamation 10949 in June of 2025. The countries affected were Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Additionally, the proclamation partially restricted the entry of people from seven countries, including Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

New Restrictions:
The U.S. expanded the list of travel restricted countries on December 16, 2025. The new expanded proclamation will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

a) Full Travel Ban

The full restrictions apply to citizens of the affected countries who are outside the U.S. as of January 1, 2026, and do not hold a valid U.S. visa as of that date.

The new proclamation continues the full suspension of entry to the U.S. of all immigrant and nonimmigrant visa holders who are citizens of Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen and **adds** 5 countries to the full restriction list: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, and Syria, and moves two countries, Laos and Sierra Leone, from the partially restricted list to the fully restricted list.

People using Palestinian Authority-issued or endorsed travel documents are also restricted from traveling to the U.S.

b) Partial Travel Ban

The partial restriction applies to people from the listed countries who are outside the U.S. as of January 1, 2026, **and** who do not have a valid visa as of

that date. It prevents the entry of immigrants, and certain specific non-immigrant categories, B-1, B-2, F, M, and J visas, as well as instructs consular officers to reduce the validity of any other nonimmigrant visas issued to nationals of the countries listed below. It does not apply to citizens of the listed countries who are in the U.S. under one of the restricted categories of visas.

Burundi, Cuba, Togo, and Venezuela continue to be under a partial restriction. 15 countries are added to the partial restriction list: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominica, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Tonga, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Citizens of Turkmenistan may enter the U.S. as non-immigrants, but not as immigrants.

Exceptions
Lawful permanent residents of the U.S., current non-immigrant visa holders, athletes and diplomats are exempt from the travel restrictions, as are some other individuals deemed to serve the national interest. In addition, dual nationals of a listed country are exempt when the individual is traveling on a passport issued by a country not subject to the travel ban.

Removed Exceptions
The new December 2025 travel ban **eliminates** the following exceptions that previously existed under the June 2025 Proclamation, meaning that individuals from the impacted countries falling within one of these categories are no longer eligible for an exception to the December 2025 travel ban:

- Immigrant visas for family members in the U.S.
- Adoptions (IR-3. IR-4, IH-3, IH-4)
- Afghan Special Immigrant Visas

The reasons cited for the expansion of these restrictions include nationality security and public safety.

Considerations for International Students and Scholars
International students or scholars currently in the U.S. who are citizens of one of the affected countries should consult with their international services office,

and or an immigration attorney, before planning travel outside the U.S. Students from the affected countries who have a valid visa *should* be allowed to re-enter the U.S., though to avoid possible problems, they may wish to return prior to the effective date of January 1, 2026. These travel restrictions **should not** apply to visa holders remaining inside the U.S. who are maintaining valid non-immigrant status, however, as always in uncertain times, careful consideration should be given to the risks of international travel and re-entry to the U.S.

Student Population Impact:
According to an analysis by Inside Higher Ed and NBC News of the initial 2025 ban, nearly 19,000 students were already studying in the U.S. from the first group of travel ban countries. The most significant addition in the December 2025 expansion is Nigeria, which sent 21,833 students to the U.S. in the 2024-25 academic year, making it a top-10 sender of international students.

Combining these figures, it is estimated that over 45,000 international students currently in the U.S. are citizens of countries now subject to either full or partial travel restrictions under the 2025 expanded bans.

Legal Challenge:
Legal challenges to this expansion of the travel ban proclamation may be filed. One currently seeking plaintiffs against the travel ban is from IMMpact Litigation. See the details at https://www.immpactlitigation.com/39-country-adjudication-pause-litigation-plaintiff-onboarding/.

The deadline to join the 39 Country Ban Litigation is December 30, 2025.

Sources:
The December 2025 Proclamation can be found here: https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/12/restricting-and-limiting-the-entry-of-foreign-nationals-to-protect-the-security-of-the-united-states/

The related fact-sheet announcement can be found here:
https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/12/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-further-restricts-and-limits-the-entry-of-foreign-nationals-to-protect-the-security-of-the-united-states/

Final summary:
Fully restricted travel from the following 19 countries, and individuals using travel documents issued or endorsed by the Palestinian Authority:

> Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, Syria, Laos and Sierra Leone

Partially restricted travel from the following 20 countries:

> Burundi, Cuba, Togo, Venezuela, Turkmenistan (immigrants only), Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominica, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Tonga, Zambia, and Zimbabwe