

What the USCIS Processing Hold Means for Applicants from Countries Subject to Trump's Travel Ban

Following President Trump's initial public statements regarding the "pause" of immigration-related processes for nationals of countries already subject to his administration's [travel ban](#), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has [announced](#) significant changes to immigration processing for such nationals.

According to a newly released memorandum ([PM-602-0192-PendingApplicationsHighRiskCountries-20251202.pdf](#)) dated December 2, 2025, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will immediately place a processing hold on all pending immigration benefit requests for applicants who are citizens of—or were born in—one of the 19 countries listed in President Trump's June 2025 travel ban.

Countries Listed Under the June 2025 Travel Ban

Full travel restrictions apply to nationals of Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.

Partial travel restrictions apply to nationals of Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

What Is Happening

Effective December 2, 2025, USCIS will:

- Pause processing of new and pending immigration benefit requests for foreign nationals from the 19 countries listed under the June 2025 travel ban.
- Re-review approved immigration benefits for individuals from these countries who entered the United States on or after January 20, 2021.
- Suspend processing of all Forms I-589 (applications for asylum and withholding of removal), regardless of nationality or country of birth.

What to Expect

Individuals impacted by this policy change should expect:

- More extensive background and security checks.
- Possible requests for evidence asking for additional documents or clarification about eligibility or security issues.
- Interviews or follow-up interviews to allow the agency to take a second look at the case.

Additional Clarification Needed

As the December 2nd memorandum does not reference the exceptions to the travel ban outlined in the related [Presidential Proclamation](#), it remains unclear whether those

exceptions will apply. Furthermore, while the December 2nd memorandum listed a limited number of immigration processes as being subject to the processing hold, internal USCIS implementation guidance and anecdotal reports indicate that the impact of the policy change could affect more processes than those specifically listed in the memorandum. USCIS is expected to issue further guidance in the coming weeks that may clarify exemptions and implementation details.

How Foster LLP Can Help

Foster LLP will continue monitoring these developments closely. For updates and guidance, visit our website at fosterglobal.com or contact our team for personalized assistance.

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