

Department of State Pauses Immigrant Visa Processing for 75 Countries Effective January 21, 2026

January 22, 2026

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) has announced that, **effective January 21, 2026**, it has **paused the issuance of immigrant visas** for nationals of **75 countries** as part of a broad policy shift aimed at reassessing public-charge-related admissibility standards.

Summary of Key Points

Countries Impacted

- The DOS suspension affects nationals of 75 countries. These countries 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.

Scope of the Suspension

- The suspension applies **only to immigrant visa applicants** (i.e., those seeking permanent residence in the U.S.).
- **Nonimmigrant visas**, including tourist, business, and student visas, **are not affected** by this pause.
- Applicants may still submit applications and attend scheduled immigrant visa interviews, but no visas will be issued to affected nationals during the pause.
- **No immigrant visas have been revoked** as part of this directive.
- Dual nationals applying with a passport from a country not on the list remain eligible for immigrant visa adjudication.
- Applicants who can show that their admission is in the U.S. national interest may qualify for an exemption, but this is likely to be issued only in limited circumstances.

Public Charge Basis

- DOS' action is tied to a policy shift applying a presumption of ineligibility under the Immigration and Nationality Act for applicants from the listed countries on the basis that such applicants have a high risk of becoming a public charge.
- The stated purpose is to prevent the entry of applicants who may rely on public benefits.

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Impact on Adjustment of Status (AOS) inside the U.S.

- As of this writing, USCIS has not indicated that it is pausing adjustment of status applications for affected nationals already present in the U.S.

Expected Duration

- The pause does not have a stated duration and appears likely to remain in effect while DOS undergoes certain policy reviews.

Practical Implications for Clients

- Immigrant visa applicants relying on consular processing in affected countries should anticipate **indefinite delays**.
- Employers and applicants should assess whether adjustment of status eligibility exists for individuals currently in the U.S.
- Dual nationals should consider which passport is most appropriate for visa processing.

If you have any questions as to how this policy may impact you, or an employee at your company, please contact a member of the Miller Canfield Immigration team at Immigration@millercanfield.com.

This information is based on the facts and guidance available at the time of publication and may change.