

## **Practice Alert: Sweeping immigration restrictions announced in the wake of the National Guard shooting**

December 2, 2025<sup>1</sup>

Last week, two National Guard members were shot in Washington, DC. The man accused of the shooting, [Rahmanullah Lakanwal](#), was screened and vetted prior to entry under the Operation Allies Welcome program and was granted asylum in April of this year.

In response, the Trump administration has announced a number of restrictive steps, detailed below. This is a rapidly developing situation, and AILA will update members as more official information is revealed.

### **All asylum decisions are halted for all nationalities**

[USCIS halted](#) all asylum decisions for all nationalities (including approvals, denials, or closure of cases), according to [news reports](#). It is unclear if this includes withholding of removal or CAT claim reviews. AILA has heard that interviews are not paused, so previously scheduled interviews will continue as normal, but no decisions are being made. AILA does not know whether any new interviews will be scheduled or how long this will last. It is unclear if the immigration courts are halting consideration of asylum cases in removal proceedings.

See also [AILA's Practice Alert](#) on the review and potential re-interview of all refugee approvals from the prior administration, which was announced prior to the National Guard shooting.

### **New guidance on immigration benefits for nationals of travel ban impacted countries**

[USCIS](#) stated that it will [re-examine](#) all permanent residence grants for nationals from the 19 countries subject to the [June 4 travel ban](#) ("travel ban countries"). This was announced via social media. We do not have further information, and do not currently know the full scope of who will be re-examined, the process for re-examination, what standards will apply, or what USCIS will do if they believe that permanent residence should not have been granted.

USCIS also issued [new guidance](#) about the consideration of country-specific information as "significant negative factors" during the vetting of noncitizens from the travel ban countries for "discretionary benefit requests." This includes adjustment of status, extension of nonimmigrant stay, change of nonimmigrant status, and many employment

---

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to the American Immigration Council for their contributions to this practice alert.

authorization applications. This applies to applications pending or filed on or after November 27, 2025.

The guidance states that “[t]he mere fact that an individual is from a country subject to [INA 212\(f\)](#) restrictions on entry or admission, however, is not by itself a significant negative factor. In three separate places in the [Policy Manual](#), USCIS added the following line: “With certain exceptions, USCIS considers relevant country-specific facts and circumstances, such as insufficient vetting and screening information that limit USCIS’ ability to assess the risks aliens from certain countries pose to the United States, as a significant negative factor in its discretionary analysis.”

Some possible applications include whether USCIS can meaningfully assess the identity of individuals, and where the country-specific concerns relate to a high rate of overstay.

USCIS notes that these factors will be considered on a case-by-case basis in the totality of the circumstances, considering the relevance of those facts to the benefit request being adjudicated and the individual requesting the benefit.

**Updated on 12/2/25: AILA has learned that USCIS has now issued an order to all adjudicators to pause final decisions (approvals or denials) for ALL FORM TYPES, as well as Naturalization Oath Ceremonies for nationals of the travel ban countries. This took effect immediately and does not have a termination date. For more information, please see [Practice Alert: Pause on All Decisions for Travel Ban Countries](#) (AILA Doc. No. 25120112).**

The 19 travel ban countries include Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

### **Restrictions specific to Afghan Nationals**

On social media, President Trump called for the “[re-examination](#)” of all Afghans who came to the US during the Biden admin. Also on social media, USCIS [indefinitely halted](#) processing of “all immigration requests” related to Afghan nationals. We do not know what standards USCIS will apply during review, or what the re-examination will consist of.

Similarly, the State Department announced on social media an [indefinite halt](#) on the issuance of non-immigrant and immigrant visas for all individuals traveling on Afghan passports. For more information see [AILA Practice Alert: DOS Pause on Afghan Visa Issuance](#).