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USCIS will consider relevant country-specific factors when using its broad discretionary authorities regarding aliens from 19 high-risk countries after halting refugee resettlement from Afghanistan and the entry of Afghan nationals in the first year of the Trump administration.

WASHINGTON— In the wake of the shooting of two National Guard service members in Washington, D.C., Wednesday by an Afghan national, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issued new guidance allowing for negative, country-specific factors to be considered when vetting aliens [from 19 high-risk countries](#). This guidance comes after the Trump administration halted refugee resettlement from Afghanistan and the entry of Afghan nationals in its first year of office.

“My primary responsibility is to ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible,” said USCIS Director Joseph Edlow. “This includes an assessment of where they are coming from and why. Yesterday’s horrific events make it abundantly clear the Biden administration spent the last four years dismantling basic vetting and screening standards, prioritizing the rapid resettlement of aliens from high-risk countries over the safety of American citizens. The Trump administration takes the opposite approach. Effective immediately, I am issuing new policy guidance that authorizes USCIS officers to consider country-specific factors as significant negative factors when reviewing immigration requests. American lives come first.”

The updated guidance, including consideration of country-specific factors such as a country’s ability to issue secure identity documents, will further strengthen USCIS’ implementation of President Trump’s Presidential Proclamation (PP) 10949, [Restricting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats](#). It will allow USCIS officers to more meaningfully assess whether an alien is a threat to public safety and national security.

This policy guidance is effective immediately and applies to requests pending or filed on or after Nov. 27, 2025.

For more information, see the USCIS [Policy Alert](#).

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