

# REPORT: U.S. TRAVEL BAN

## Implications for Business Travel

June 2025

On June 4, 2025, the United States government issued a presidential proclamation reinstating and expanding travel bans, effective June 9, 2025. The order blocks entry for nationals of 19 countries, divided into two groups: 12 countries with full entry bans and seven countries with partial visa restrictions. The move was justified on the grounds of national security, citing terrorism concerns, inadequate vetting and high visa overstay rates.

### Countries affected

#### Full travel ban

Nationals of the following 12 countries are completely barred from entering the U.S.:

- Afghanistan
- Chad
- Republic of the Congo
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Haiti
- Iran
- Libya
- Myanmar
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Yemen

Under the presidential proclamation, entry of all nationals from these 12 “very high-risk” countries are fully suspended for both immigrant and non-immigrant visas. These nations were flagged for links to terrorism, deficient identity screening, or unwillingness to cooperate with U.S. immigration enforcement.

#### Partial travel restrictions

Nationals of the following seven countries face partial bans, with specific visa categories suspended:

- Burundi
- Cuba
- Laos
- Sierra Leone
- Togo
- Turkmenistan
- Venezuela

U.S. officials targeted these nations due to their high visa overstay rates or poor law-enforcement cooperation. They are considered to be “high-risk,” but not as severely deficient as the 12 countries on the fully banned list.

For the partially banned countries, immigrant visas and certain non-immigrant visas (B-1 business, B-2 tourist, F student, M vocational, J exchange visitor) are blocked. In practice, this bars most business or other visa types, however, certain work or diplomatic visas may still be issued with additional scrutiny and shorter validity periods.

## Exceptions to the bans

The proclamation provides several important exceptions and a waiver process to mitigate its impact:

- U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card holders): [Exempt](#). People from the banned countries who are U.S. permanent residents can continue to enter the U.S. freely. The ban does not apply.
- Existing Valid Visa Holders: [Exempt](#). Foreign nationals from the affected countries, who already possess a valid U.S. visa as of June 9, 2025, are not barred from entry under this policy.
- Dual Nationals Traveling on a Passport of a Non-Banned Country: [Exempt](#). If an individual has dual citizenship, e.g., a national of Chad who also holds French citizenship, and travels on the passport of an unaffected country, the ban does not apply.
- Diplomatic and Official Visas: [Exempt](#). Certain visa categories are categorically excepted, including A visas (diplomats), C-2/C-3 (UN transit), G visas (international organizations) and NATO visas.
- Immediate Family of U.S. Citizens: [Limited Exemption](#). The proclamation allows immigrant visas for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (spouses, children, parents under IR-1, IR-2, IR-5 categories) if they can provide “clear and convincing evidence” of the family relationship (such as DNA for a child). This exception aims to prevent family separation in cases of verified close relationships.
- Humanitarian/Special Cases: [Certain special immigrant visas are exempt](#), notably Afghan interpreters who aided U.S. forces (Afghan SIVs) and other U.S. government-linked special immigrant cases. Also, persecuted religious/ethnic minorities from Iran can still receive U.S. immigrant visas.
- Major International Sporting Events: Uniquely, the order [exempts travel by athletes and essential staff for major events](#) like the World Cup or Olympic Games (as determined by the State Department), recognizing the national interest in allowing those participants.
- Case-by-Case Waivers: [National Interest Exceptions](#). Beyond the automatic exemptions above, the proclamation establishes a waiver process for other individuals who do not fall under a listed exception. A waiver can be granted if an applicant’s entry is deemed to serve U.S. national interests or be necessary on humanitarian grounds.

## How to apply for a waiver

Anyone seeking a waiver or exception must do so during the visa application process. Consular officers will review if an applicant qualifies under any automatic exception. If not exempt, the applicant can request a waiver by demonstrating their entry is in the national interest, poses no security threat, and that denying entry would cause undue hardship (criteria similar to the 2018 travel ban waivers).

The final decision on waivers rests with high-level officials in the State or Justice Department, who must coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security. There is no separate public application form for waivers; rather, the consular officer forwards eligible cases for interagency approval.

In practical terms, travelers from a banned country that need to travel to the U.S. have limited options: Either qualify for a built-in exception, such as lawful permanent residence, dual citizenship, or a diplomatic mission, or seek a discretionary waiver for a compelling reason. Otherwise, new visa applications from these countries will be denied starting June 9, 2025.

## **Impacts on business travel**

The newly announced travel bans will add new complexities for international business travel, particularly for organizations that rely on talent mobility and cross-border collaboration.

For the 12 countries under the full ban, entry to the U.S. is suspended across all visa categories, including business and employment-based travel. This will limit the ability of individuals from those countries to participate in in-person meetings, training and project-based work in the U.S. Companies will need to consider remote alternatives or redeploy personnel from third countries to maintain operations.

In the case of the seven countries subject to partial restrictions, business travel is directly affected. While some visa types remain available, B-1/B-2 visas are suspended, and consular guidance calls for heightened scrutiny and shortened validity periods for others. This may introduce additional layers of planning and risk management for employers. Student and exchange visa restrictions could also affect long-term workforce development and future hiring pipelines.

Multinational organizations with staff, operations or clients in the affected countries may need to reassess their travel plans, shift certain activities abroad, or adapt staffing approaches to account for the limited inbound access.

## **Indirect effects on business travel**

Foreign nationals from any of the 19 affected countries, who are currently in the U.S., face reentry risks if they travel abroad. While the bans do not apply to individuals lawfully present in the U.S. with valid visas, those who depart may be unable to return if their visa expires or if a new visa is required, as issuance is suspended under the proclamation.

U.S. citizens and other travelers may encounter complications when transiting or traveling to any of the countries on the two lists. While not subject to the bans themselves, travelers visiting or passing through affected countries may face heightened security risks, limited consular support and potential reciprocal entry restrictions imposed by those governments, such as additional screening or visa requirements.

Travelers need to be aware of travel insurance gaps. Many standard business travel insurance policies do not cover trip cancellations or delays caused by government travel bans or visa denials, treating them as political or foreseeable events. As a result, costs related to denied entry, rebooking or extended stays may fall on the traveler or their employer.

Any business travelers affected by the bans may be denied entry or find themselves stranded mid-journey. In politically unstable or high-risk environments, security evacuation coverage may be necessary. Legal assistance should be readily available for entry denials, visa issues or detentions, and companies should consider covering related costs. While airlines typically return inadmissible travelers, additional expenses, such as lodging, meals, and rebooking, are rarely covered. Clear protocols for legal and logistical support are essential to uphold duty of care towards corporate travelers.

Global organizations should treat this latest development as an ongoing risk factor, integrating travel-ban monitoring into their risk management processes. With the right visibility and planning, they can respond quickly if the list of banned countries expands or if rules are tightened further. For now, focusing on the confirmed list is critical, but monitoring for additional revisions will ensure no one is caught off guard by future changes.

The information presented in this report represents the latest view from BCD Travel's Global Crisis Management team as at June 6, 2025. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.