

‘We Don’t Want Them’: Trump Signs Travel Ban on Citizens From 12 Countries

The travel ban revives an effort from President Trump’s first term that led to chaos and court battles.

**By Hamed Aleaziz
New York Times**

President Trump on Wednesday signed a travel ban on 12 countries, primarily in Africa and the Middle East, [reviving an effort](#) from his first term to prevent large numbers of immigrants and visitors from entering the United States.

The ban, which goes into effect on Monday, bars travel to the United States by citizens of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Mr. Trump also imposed restrictions, but stopped short of a full ban, on travel from Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela. People from those countries cannot come to the United States permanently or get tourist or student visas.

The decision resurrects a policy from Mr. Trump’s first term, which caused chaos at airports and led to legal challenges. It is the latest move in Mr. Trump’s sweeping crackdown on immigration, after he blocked asylum at the southern border, barred international students from Harvard University and ordered immigration raids across the country.

The decision came days after an Egyptian man in Colorado was arrested and charged with carrying out an attack on a group honoring hostages being held in Gaza. Trump administration officials had warned that there would be a crackdown after that attack.

“The recent terror attack in Boulder, Colo., has underscored the extreme dangers posed to our country by the entry of foreign nationals who are not properly vetted, as well as those who come here as temporary visitors and overstay their visas,” Mr. Trump said in a video message announcing the travel ban. “We don’t want them.”

Egypt was not on the list of banned countries.

The current version of the travel ban is more likely to withstand legal scrutiny than Mr. Trump’s initial efforts during his first term, legal experts said.

“They seem to have learned some lessons from the three different rounds of litigation we went through during the first Trump administration,” said Stephen Vladeck, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center. “But a lot will depend upon how it’s actually enforced — and whether it’s applied in ways that are themselves unlawful or even unconstitutional.”

Mr. Vladeck said that the several-month lead-up to the ban — including the analysis done by the secretary of state — and the range of countries involved made it less vulnerable than the ban issued during the first Trump administration.

George Fishman, who was an attorney in the Department of Homeland Security during the first Trump administration, said that courts should follow Supreme Court precedent. He said that “any lower courts that enjoin the proclamation will do so knowing that their injunctions will be overturned. They would be engaged in virtue signaling, pure and simple.”

People with existing visas would be exempted from the ban. Other exemptions include green card holders, athletes traveling to the United States for the World Cup or the Olympics, and Afghans eligible for the Special Immigrant Visa program, which is for those who helped the U.S. government during the war in Afghanistan.

Mr. Trump has long railed against migration from Muslim-majority countries. During his first presidential campaign, he proposed a full ban on Muslims entering the country. In his video message on Wednesday, Mr. Trump alluded to increased migration into Europe in the last decade, which was driven by migrants fleeing Syria and other Muslim-majority countries. He claimed his first term’s travel ban helped protect the country from terror attacks.

“We will not let what happened in Europe happen to America,” he said.

During Mr. Trump’s first term, he tried to enforce two versions of a travel ban, but courts blocked them. The Supreme Court [eventually permitted a rewritten ban](#) — one that affected citizens from eight nations, six of them predominantly Muslim — to take effect.

The list later evolved. His first travel ban inspired mass protests and chaos at airports across the United States. At one point, the homeland security secretary had to clarify that green card holders from the banned countries could enter the United States.

President Joseph R. Biden Jr. revoked Mr. Trump’s travel bans soon after he took office in 2021, calling them “a stain on our national conscience” and “inconsistent with our long history of welcoming people of all faiths and no faith at all.”

Mr. Trump signaled his intent to usher in a new version in a Day 1 executive order in January, ordering the secretary of state, alongside other top government leaders, to review the screening capabilities of countries and to recommend whether migration from those areas should be blocked.

The latest travel ban cites issues with security vetting in certain countries and says immigrants from those countries frequently overstay their visas.

Representative Pramila Jayapal, Democrat of Washington, said in a statement that the policy is “discriminatory” and “not only flies in the face of what our country is supposed to stand for — it will be harmful to our economy and our communities that rely on the contributions of people who come to America from this wide range of countries.”

Mr. Trump justified the travel ban as necessary for national security, but critics say it discriminates against people based on their ethnicity alone.

“The proclamation is another example of the president making a mockery out of immigration and national security laws in order to punish races, religions and ideas he doesn’t like,” said Becca Heller, head of the International Refugee Assistance Project. The group led a lawsuit against the first travel ban in 2017.