

# US immigration authorities reviewing status of 3.3 million “green card” holders

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The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is pausing indefinitely all decisions on asylum applications, while launching systematic reviews that threaten the legal status of two large groups of immigrants—the 3.3 million green card holders from 19 countries designated by President Trump and the 180,000 people admitted as refugees during the four years of the Biden administration.

The Trump administration claims that these actions are in response to the shooting Wednesday of two National Guard soldiers in Washington D.C. by an Afghan refugee, a former participant in a CIA-run death squad in his home country who fled after the Taliban takeover in 2021. One of the two soldiers, Sarah Beckstrom, 20, of Summersville, West Virginia, has died, while the other, Andrew Wolfe, 24, of Martinsburg, West Virginia, remains in critical condition.

The shooting last week is merely a pretext, as both the selection of the 19 countries “of concern” was announced in June and the decision to review all refugees admitted during the Biden administration had been made public Monday, before Wednesday’s attack.

The review of green card holders will affect 3.3 million people, the bulk of them, 2.2 million, from three countries in the Caribbean basin—1 million from Cuba, 700,000 from Venezuela and 500,000 from Haiti. All three countries are subject to either US economic blockade or other forms of sanctions, which have devastated living standards.

The majority of these Caribbean green card holders live in Florida, although there are other large concentrations in New York, New Jersey and many other states.

Ten African countries are affected—Burundi, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya,

Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Togo. The largest such group is Somalis, concentrated in the Twin Cities metropolitan area of Minnesota and targeted for incessant witch-hunting by the Trump administration.

Six Asian countries are affected—Afghanistan, Iran, Laos, Myanmar, Turkmenistan and Yemen. Iran alone accounts for at least 400,000 green card holders, with the largest concentration in Southern California but widely settled across the US.

The agency also declared that in the case of at least seven of the 19 countries, including Afghanistan, Somalia and Venezuela, there was no “competent or central authority for issuing passports and civil documents,” which would make it virtually impossible for the USCIS to favorably review their cases.

The Trump order to pause all asylum decisions does not stop the processing of applications already submitted or prevent refugees from making new applications. But it means that no refugees will be given final approval for asylum for the indefinite future. The USCIS guidance to officers reviewing asylum cases reads: “Once you’ve reached decision entry, stop and hold.”

Trump sought to justify his sweeping attack on refugees with a racist diatribe against “Third World Countries” whose people would be “non-compatible with Western civilization.” White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed that the administration had effectively stopped all refugee intake since taking office, “with the exception of Afrikaners fleeing persecution in South Africa.” (In other words, members of the white South African minority who ruled under apartheid.)

The plan to review the cases of all 180,000 refugees admitted to the US between January 20, 2021 and February 20, 2025 was revealed November 24 by the

Associated Press, which obtained an internal memo from USCIS Director Joseph Edlow. The memo also required that even refugees who have already received green cards should be subjected to review.

The memo declared that if the USCIS determines the person did not qualify for entry as a refugee, the person “has no right to appeal” and would immediately be put into removal proceedings through an immigration court.

The agency already has an enormous backlog of 1.4 million pending asylum claims, and the addition of automatic reviews of Biden era admissions, as well as the review of 3.3 million green card holders from the 19 “countries of concern,” effectively extends the waiting list indefinitely.

The long delays make it more likely that refugees awaiting determination of their claims will fall afoul of the complex and burdensome requirements, including endless paperwork and regular reporting to federal officers, leading to their seizure by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) thugs for detention and deportation.

Trump’s border czar Tom Homan told Fox News, referring to Biden-era refugees and immigrants, “I really, truly think that most of them are going to end up getting deported, because we’re not going to be able to properly vet them.”

At a press conference Monday afternoon, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt declared, “President Trump believes that he has a sacred obligation to reverse the calamity of mass unchecked migration into our country. ... In the wake of last week’s atrocity, it is more important than ever to finish carrying out the president’s mass deportation operation.”

The response of the Democratic Party to Trump’s effort to smear all immigrants with the blood of the two National Guard soldiers shot last week has been one of tacit acceptance. At his press briefing Monday, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries did not even raise the issue, instead appealing for the Trump administration and the Republicans to “actually partner with Democrats to solve problems on behalf of the American people.”

Only when directly asked by a reporter—after a lengthy disquisition on healthcare subsidies under the Affordable Care Act—did Jeffries address the effective ending of asylum for refugees and the attack on green

card holders and then with another appeal for bipartisanship.

“Yeah, our view is that, one, of course we support the notion of having strong border security, no one ever disputes that,” the Democrat said. “We have a broken immigration system. We need to fix it, but it should be fixed, in a comprehensive and bipartisan way. But at the same period of time we are going to stand up for law-abiding immigrant families and communities who have been under assault by Donald Trump and the so-called secretary of homeland security. They’re a disgrace.”

As to taking any action to oppose this “disgrace,” the House Democratic leader said nothing.



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