

# U.S. suspends immigration visas for 75 countries, sending ripple effects across investment immigration strategies

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, January 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. State Department has announced that it will halt the processing and issuance of immigrant visas for nationals of 75 countries, citing concerns that applicants from these jurisdictions may rely on public assistance at “unacceptable” levels.

This suspension, scheduled to take effect from January 21, affects applicants for [permanent residence \(immigrant visas\)](#), while non-immigrant categories such as short-term tourist or business visas are not covered by the current measure.

The pause will “remain active until the U.S. can ensure that new immigrants will not extract wealth from the American people,” according to the State Department.

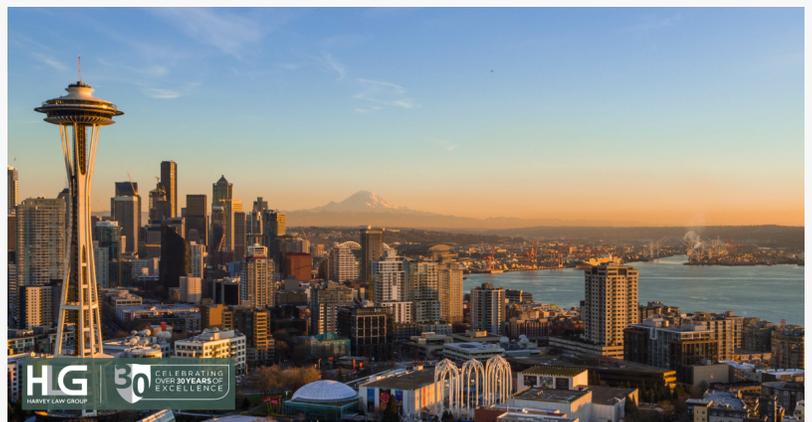
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*Jean François Harvey, Global Managing Partner at Harvey Law Group*

Among the [75 affected countries](#) are key emerging markets and popular migration hubs, including Thailand and several nations in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.

The announcement follows a series of prior restrictions and heightened vetting policies, forming part of a broader tightening of the U.S.’ immigration framework.



This evolving environment underscores the importance of specialised immigration and investment immigration counsel.

## POTENTIAL RIPPLE EFFECTS ACROSS INVESTMENT IMMIGRATION

This suspension potentially carries significant implications for investment immigration strategies

that rely on U.S. permanent residence as an endpoint.

Investors and professionals from affected countries who had planned to transition from temporary to permanent status in the U.S. may now face prolonged uncertainty, delays, or the need to redesign their long-term migration plans.

Immigrant visa applicants who are nationals of affected countries may still submit applications and attend interviews; however, immigrant visas will not be issued during the pause.

Applicants holding a valid passport from a country not listed are exempt from the pause.

For EB-2 National Interest Waiver (NIW) applicants, the pause applies only to immigrant visa issuance at U.S. embassies and consulates (i.e. the consular stage).

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) processing is not impacted, and I-140 petitions may continue to be filed and adjudicated as normal.

For applicants with approved petitions, consular processing steps, including DS-260 submission, may continue; however, immigrant visa issuance (the final issuance stage) for affected nationals remains paused.

For global companies, the new policy adds complexity to workforce mobility planning when senior staff or key personnel hold passports from targeted jurisdictions.

In practice, multinational employers must now consider alternative structures - such as regional headquarters outside the U.S., or assignments routed through jurisdictions with more predictable immigration policies - to maintain operational continuity.

#### WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CARIBBEAN CBI PROGRAMS?

The suspension covers multiple Caribbean countries that operate [citizenship-by-investment \(CBI\) programs](#), including Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia.

It's important to note that the measure does not cancel these countries' CBI programs, nor does it impact their value proposition, as "most clients pursue a secondary citizenship not for visa-free travel but as a long-term strategic asset, commonly for tax planning purposes, long-term mobility, security, and optionality," said Jean-François Harvey, Global Managing Partner at Harvey Law Group.

Recent discussions by the European Union on imposing visa requirements on CBI countries are also unlikely to affect the demand for Caribbean CBI, as the measure - far from being punitive or equivalent to a travel ban - would simply introduce a procedural step by requiring Caribbean

passport holders to apply for a visa, which can now be done electronically for most countries.

With platforms now fully streamlined, including in the U.S. and Canada, the vast majority of visa applicants should not face any issues in obtaining visas.

“This shift presents Caribbean countries with a valuable opportunity,” Harvey said, adding that these countries “already implemented a host of best practices that reinforce their passport issuance process and align it with international standards.”

All major Caribbean CBI jurisdictions have passed legislation to create a regional regulator, with the official target for the authority’s launch set for April 2026 (though market consensus points to a more realistic implementation date around June 2026).

The regulator, based in Grenada, will be responsible for setting minimum regional standards on due diligence, processing, and marketing, as well as supervising and monitoring national CBI units and coordinating cross border enforcement.

National citizenship units in each country will continue processing applications and interacting with agents and developers - but under harmonised legislation and with mandatory reporting of any breaches to the regional authority.

“These changes may help preserve, restore, or enhance visa-free access in the future,” Harvey said.

## OTHER STABLE PATHWAYS AND JURISDICTIONS

The current U.S. stance does not close the door on international immigration; rather, it elevates the need to structure cross-border residence and citizenship strategies around jurisdictions with stable, transparent immigration policies.

Several categories of options typically remain largely unaffected by this specific U.S. immigrant visa suspension:

EU residence by investment and talent routes:

Many European Union member states offer residence pathways based on investment, entrepreneurship, or specialised skills under harmonised EU and national rules, and these programs are governed independently of U.S. visa decisions. Careful program selection can optimize Schengen mobility, education access, and long-term security, such as the Netherlands Startup Visa or Portugal Golden Visa, among others.

Common law jurisdictions with predictable frameworks:

Countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and certain Asia-Pacific jurisdictions maintain mature, rules-based immigration systems with clear business, entrepreneur, and skilled-worker pathways that are not directly impacted by U.S. decisions on immigrant visas. For globally mobile families, these destinations often combine lifestyle, education, and business advantages with relatively robust policy continuity.

Diversified citizenship and residence portfolios:

Sophisticated investors increasingly pursue a portfolio approach: combining one or more citizenships with multiple residencies to manage geopolitical, tax, and mobility risk - rather than choosing a single element to anchor a global mobility strategy.

In each case, the design of a compliant, future-proof structure requires detailed analysis of current law, treaty networks, tax interaction, and each client's family and corporate profile.

This evolving environment underscores the importance of specialised immigration and investment immigration counsel. Policy shifts of this scale can change risk profiles overnight, and high-net-worth individuals and globally mobile professionals need advisers who continuously monitor regulatory developments across multiple jurisdictions.

## ABOUT HARVEY LAW GROUP

Harvey Law Group (HLG), the world's leading business immigration law firm, has more than 20 offices globally and over 30 years of extensive experience and expertise in Citizenship and Residency by Investment programs.

The firm's global practice guides clients through program selection, project due diligence, application preparation, and compliance with evolving regional and national rules, blending global expertise with local insights to provide unparalleled legal counsel and empower our clients to stay at the forefront of their industries.

In the face of a dynamic and intricate regulatory landscape, HLG embraces change and delivers tangible outcomes for our clients worldwide.

Following latest regulatory changes in the U.S., HLG's experienced immigration lawyers can:

- Analyse how U.S. immigrant visa suspensions interact with existing residence-by-investment or citizenship-by-investment strategies, and identify where plans should be adapted or diversified.
- Map out jurisdiction-specific risks (for example, exposure to changing U.S. or EU policies) versus more stable alternatives, so that clients are not over-concentrated in one region or framework.

For more information, visit <https://harveylawcorporation.com>

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