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Federal Court Strikes Down Trump's Discriminatory 75-Country Visa Ban

NEW YORK — In a major victory for families, fairness, and the rule of law, a federal court in New York struck down the Trump administration's blanket, nationality-based "public charge" ban on immigrant visa processing for people from 75 countries. The court held that the ban exceeds the Secretary of State's statutory and regulatory authority and violates Section 1152(a)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965's prohibition on nationality-based discrimination in issuing a visa. In its decision, the court also vacated and set aside any visa denial based solely on the ban and ordered the State Department to restore lawful, case-by-case evaluation of visa applications.

"We welcome this ruling because, at its heart, this case is about keeping families together," said **Anna Gallagher, executive director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)**. "The suspension of lawful visa processing across 75 countries separated spouses, parents, and children who were simply following the legal immigration process. Catholic social teaching calls us to uphold the dignity of every person and recognize the family as the foundation of society. Today's decision affirms both those values and the rule of law, allowing families to once again move forward toward reunification."

"This decision is a tremendous victory for the rule of law," said **Diana Konate, Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Advocacy at African Communities Together, an associational plaintiff in the case**. "This unlawful and racist ban caused immeasurable harm, cruelly keeping families and loved ones apart. Today, we are elated to tell our community members: this ban is no more."

"Today's decision is a significant victory for the hundreds of thousands of families across the country and the world whose lives were thrown into chaos by this administration's unlawful and discriminatory visa ban," said **Joanna Cuevas Ingram, Senior Staff Attorney at the National Immigration Law Center**. "The court made clear that immigration laws cannot be used to justify discrimination. We are determined to ensure every person and family this ban harmed receives appropriate relief and will continue to hold this administration accountable to its obligations under the law."

"This is a victory for justice and fairness," said **Susan Welber, Supervising Attorney with the Civil Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. "The Administration cannot weaponize the public charge ground of inadmissibility to keep families apart. We call on the State Department to immediately resume consular processing for our individual plaintiffs and all others impacted by this blatant lawlessness."

"Today's ruling is a critical rebuke of an unlawful and discriminatory policy that inflicted enormous harm on families and communities across the country," said **Skye Perryman, President and CEO of Democracy Forward**.

“The Trump-Vance administration cannot weaponize immigration law to blacklist entire countries, separate families, and deny people rights guaranteed by the Constitution without being held accountable. We are honored to represent our clients and grateful that the court took action to protect their rights.”

“Today’s ruling is a significant victory for the families and communities harmed by this policy. After months of separation and uncertainty, our clients can finally move forward, free to pursue the legal immigration pathways this administration unlawfully tried to block,” said **Sarah Wilson, Partner & Federal Immigration Litigation Practice Leader at Colombo & Hurd**.

“This ruling is a resounding rebuke of a discriminatory policy that tore families apart and treated entire nationalities as unworthy of due process,” said **Antionette Dozier, Senior Attorney for Western Center on Law & Poverty**. “Congress set out clear, individualized criteria for immigrant visa eligibility—not a blanket ban that drew, in the words of District Judge Hon. Jeannette A. Vargas, ‘pernicious distinctions based upon nationality’. For 75 countries’ worth of families, this decision means a return to fair, case-by-case review, and a chance to be reunited with their loved ones. No administration gets to override the law because it deems an applicant’s nationality unacceptable.”

“This latest attempt by the Trump administration to enforce its white nationalist worldview through U.S. immigration policy is, like the others, equal parts retrograde and unlawful,” said **Baher Azmy, Legal Director of The Center for Constitutional Rights**. “We are proud to stand by communities that will not stop fighting against the administration’s attempts to project its racist insecurities to tear apart families.”

The National Immigration Law Center, Democracy Forward, The Legal Aid Society, the Western Center on Law & Poverty, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and Colombo & Hurd brought the lawsuit on behalf of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); African Communities Together; and individuals whose lives were upended by the ban. The case was filed on February 2 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

The lawsuit argued that the U.S. Department of State imposed an unlawful, discriminatory nationality-based barrier to legal immigration that strips families and working people of the process guaranteed by law. The Trump administration baselessly cited “public charge” risk as its stated justification for the ban, after relentlessly and cruelly smearing immigrant communities, particularly communities of color.

The defendants in the lawsuit are U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the U.S. Department of State.

Read the decision [here](#) and the initial filing announcement [here](#).

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