



# USAID Alumni Association

February 24, 2026

Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Immigration and Visitor Treatment of Former USAID Locally Employed Staff

Dear Secretary Rubio:

The USAID Alumni Association (UAA) is aware of **a number of restrictions on foreign nationals' entry into, or ability to remain in, the United States, issued in the last year.**<sup>1</sup> These restrictions harm those who stood with and served the United States in times of need. **UAA strongly urges that exceptions for former locally-employed staff (LES) employed by the U.S. Government (USG) be expressly included all these immigrant and non-immigrant visitor-related issuances, and in future issuances, as such exceptions were included in the travel bans of Presidential Proclamations 10949 and 10998.**<sup>2</sup> **We urge that all implementing guidance and practice recognize, and provide special consideration for, LES formerly employed by the USG.**

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<sup>1</sup> These include, among others

- USCIS Policy Memorandum PM-602-0192 (Dec. 2, 2025) Hold and Review of all Pending Asylum Applications and all USCIS Benefit Applications Filed by Aliens from High-Risk Countries
- Visa Bond Pilot Program Temporary Final Rule (Aug. 5, 2025 – Aug. 5, 2026) (90 Federal Register 37378, Aug. 5, 2025, adding paragraph (c) to 22 CFR 41.11)
- Immigrant Visa Processing Updates for Nationalities at High Risk of Public Benefits Usage (Jan. 14, 2026) Travel.State.Gov Notice

<sup>2</sup> Travel ban on nationals of 19 countries (June 4, 2025) and then on nationals of 38 countries (Dec. 16, 2025)

**We are especially concerned that USCIS Policy Memorandum PM-602-0192 (Dec. 2, 2025) unfairly penalizes those who honorably served the United States and now places them at risk. This Memorandum places a hold on all USCIS “benefit applications” filed by aliens from the 38 “high-risk” countries designated by Presidential Proclamations 10949 and 10998, regardless of date of entry into the U.S. It provides for re-review, and potentially re-interview, for all “benefits requests” for aliens who entered the U.S. on or after January 20, 2021. It also provides that this rereview/reinterview may be applied to aliens who entered the U.S. prior to that date. It places on hold all applications for asylum and for withholding of removal, irrespective of country of origin.**

**This likely includes most actions relevant to immigrants, including extensions of current approvals such as green cards or employment authorizations, and actions that would routinely occur, such as naturalization after holding a green card for the requisite time. Even if operational guidance is issued soon, its implementation could take years. This could place many immigrants, including LES formerly employed by the USG, out of status as their existing documents expire and new approvals languish in a queue. The new visa bond policy makes travel to the United States inaccessible for former LES who qualify as non-immigrant visitors.**

**Exceptions for LES formerly employed by the USG are critical for many reasons:**

- **LES demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the United States by advancing its mission for decades, often going well beyond the call of duty and at significant personal risk. It is contrary to our national interest to undermine this loyalty by allowing bureaucratic delays or rereview to push them out of legal status. It is similarly against our national interest to require former LES to post an unaffordable visa bond to visit the country they faithfully served throughout their working lives.**
- **LES were vetted and re-vetted for years in their home countries by the U.S. embassy’s Regional Security Officers. They were again thoroughly vetted by the USG when they emigrated to the U.S.**
- **U.S. statute and policy recognize the importance of attracting and retaining top-quality LES, and the importance of the opportunity to emigrate to the U.S. on an SIV to that policy. Current and prospective LES are highly aware of how the USG treats its current and former LES – which significantly affects the USG’s future ability to attract and retain top-quality local staff.**

- The **broader public overseas** is highly aware of how the U.S. treats non-citizens, both immigrants and visitors, in this age of instant information. The public **perception of the U.S. as a fair and humane country directly affects the security and safety of official Americans overseas** – a matter of which we are intimately aware. More broadly, it affects the security and safety of all Americans abroad and, indeed, of the U.S. itself.

In conclusion, we respectfully urge the Administration to ensure that former LES are explicitly protected in all current and future immigration and non-immigrant visitor policies. Recognizing their decades of loyal service and safeguarding their legal status is a strategic imperative for U.S. national security, credibility, and the continued ability to attract and retain top-quality local staff overseas, as well as a moral obligation. How the United States treats those who have risked their lives and careers on its behalf sends a powerful signal to partners, allies, and future LES around the world—and failure to act now would undermine the very values and security interests we seek to uphold.

Sincerely,

USAID Alumni Association

CC:

The Honorable Brian Mast  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee

The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee

The Honorable James Risch  
Chairman  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, State Department and Related Programs

(CC List Continued)

The Honorable Lois Frankel

Ranking Member

House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, State Department and Related Programs

The Honorable Lindsey Graham

Chairman

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations

The Honorable Brian Schatz

Ranking Member

Senate Appropriations subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations