



United States Department of State
Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Detering Atrocities through Travel Restrictions

In certain circumstances, visa restrictions can be used as a tool to deter future atrocities and prevent perpetrators from entering the United States. The United States may also propose or support a global travel ban through a UN Security Council resolution for an even greater impact. A UN travel ban is generally one aspect of a broader UN sanction process and package, which can include an asset freeze on an individual, an arms embargo, and/or other measures specific to an individual or country.

U.S. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

When imposed unilaterally by the United States:

- Visa restrictions may apply when perpetrators commit an action that makes them ineligible for entry to the United States under a variety of domestic legal authorities, including sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Presidential Proclamation 8697, and Section 7031(c) of the FY 2016 State, Foreign Operations and Related Authorities Appropriations Act.
- Individuals applying for visas or seeking entry into the United States are subject to screening through visa and border security databases and in-person interviews that can provide consular officers and immigration officials with information regarding an applicant's possible inadmissibility, including any relevant atrocity-related restrictions.

UN TRAVEL BANS

When approved multilaterally through a UN Security Council resolution:

- UN travel bans generally require Member States to deny entry into or transit through their territory to individuals subject to the travel ban.
- UN travel bans do not require States to deny entry into their territory of their own nationals, and UN travel bans generally include other exceptions to allow travel to occur in certain situations (for example, travel in connection with a judicial process).
- The Security Council resolution contains “designation criteria,” defining those actions and conditions under which individual perpetrators may be subject to the ban and other sanctions contained in the resolution. Criteria may include involvement in atrocities or other violations or abuses of human rights.
- The resolution may have an annex that designates specific individuals for a travel restriction.
- A “Sanctions Committee” composed of the members of the Security Council may designate individuals for the travel restriction. The committee may consider recommendations of a UN “Panel of Experts” for the sanctions regime.

U.S. ENFORCEMENT OF UN TRAVEL BANS:

- Each member state of the UN is responsible for enforcing UN travel bans with respect to its own territory.
- The United States can implement UN travel bans through provisions in the Immigration and Nationality Act, often section 212(f).
- States may report violations of the travel bans to the relevant UN Sanctions Committee, as may the relevant Panel of Experts. The committee may then take appropriate steps to investigate, including contacting the State involved.
- The United States works to bolster the enforcement of UN travel bans through diplomatic efforts to encourage other nations, especially neighboring and regional countries, to enforce UN travel restrictions.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you have specific questions, please contact CSO's Atrocities Prevention team:
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For information on UN sanctions see:
<https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/information>