



Talking Points: U.S. Visa Sanctions against Cambodia August 25, 2017

Background: Officials from the Department of Homeland Security and State Department have confirmed the administration's directive to trigger visa sanctions against four countries, including Cambodia. This aggressive move comes as an effort to fulfill President Trump's campaign promise to punish countries that do not cooperate with U.S. deportation policy. A [group of U.S. deportees](#) recently pressured Cambodia to stop accepting removals from the U.S. due to humanitarian concerns, resulting in the [halting of travel documents](#) a number of times in the past year.

To date, over 800 Cambodians have been deported since 1998. However, over 1,600 more community members live in the country with deportation orders and are at a potential risk of removal if this policy effectively pressures Cambodia into accepting more deportees.¹

The Southeast Asian American community condemns the Trump administration for using bullying tactics to threaten Cambodian families and destabilize communities. We call on Members of Congress to issue statements denouncing this directive and to stand in solidarity with the Southeast Asian American community because this policy:

Ignores the Humanitarian Implications of Deporting Refugees

- Most Cambodians impacted by deportation are refugees of decades-long war, bombings, and one of the worst genocides of the twentieth century.
- Many encountered challenges during their initial resettlement, including high rates of poverty, post-traumatic stress disorder, and poor educational outcomes.
- [Unjust and overly broad enforcement policies](#) passed in 1996 have also made these individuals vulnerable to deportation as a result of over-criminalization, racial profiling, and incarceration.
- A majority have lived in the country for years as lawful permanent residents, and all have completed their time for old convictions. They have moved on to become valued community members, family breadwinners, and business owners.

Hurts Families and Does Not Address Community Safety

- Proponents of the policy claim that these sanctions are necessary to keep the public safe from "criminal aliens," highlighting a few incidents of immigrants who have reoffended.

¹ Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, "US Deportation Outcomes by Charge, Completed Cases in Immigration Courts": http://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court_backlog/deport_outcome_charge.php

- But for every isolated incident of recidivism, thousands of other fathers and mothers moved on with their lives and are quietly raising their U.S. citizen children, supporting their elderly parents, starting businesses, and supporting youth in the community who might otherwise lack mentors.
- Deporting these individuals for crimes that they have already served their time for tears at the fabric of our communities.
- Deportation makes communities less secure by breaking up families and disrupting the local economy.

Is a False, Misguided Policy that Does Nothing but Stoke Fear

- The Administration's move to issue visa sanctions against four countries all at once is unprecedented. This tool has only ever been used against a total of two countries over the past two decades.
- This is part of the Trump administration's ongoing attempt to scapegoat immigrants and refugees and to pander to their anti-immigrant base.
- We must invest our resources in finding real, long-lasting solutions through progressive reform of our sorely outdated immigration system.

Contact Information:

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