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THE TIMES OF INDIA

USCIS goes full throttle: Perceived antisemitic content will result in visa and green card denials

TNN | Apr 9, 2025, 10:23 PM IST



The writing was already on the wall – social media activity was being scrutinised and immigrants, including foreign students, were facing the brunt for any activity or post that could be perceived as a national security concern, even tangentially. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in a release today has made this official. It states, “Today, USCIS will begin considering aliens’ antisemitic activity on social media and the physical harassment of Jewish individuals as grounds for denying immigration benefit requests. This will immediately affect aliens applying for lawful permanent resident status, foreign students and aliens affiliated with educational institutions linked to antisemitic activity.”

In other words, international students, those applying for green card status, and those seeking non-immigrant work visas (including H-1B) for jobs affiliated with educational institutions that are perceived as being antisemitic will be impacted and their visa applications denied.

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[**USCIS to look into social media of visa applicants to check for anti-semitic activities**](#)

TOI in its edition of March 30 had reported that, hundreds of international students had faced repercussions – it was not just active college activism condemning the killings of civilians and children in Gaza, but even sharing of

a social media post or liking a post that seemingly led to arbitrary revocation of their F1 visa and termination of their records on SEVIS. Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, has earlier confirmed revocation of visas of 300 foreign students. TOI had also mentioned that even new visa applications are being subjected to social media scrutiny, based on which applicants will be denied the opportunity to study in the US.

“Under this guidance, USCIS will consider social media content that indicates an alien endorsing, espousing, promoting, or supporting antisemitic terrorism, antisemitic terrorist organizations, or other antisemitic activity as a negative factor in any USCIS discretionary analysis when adjudicating immigration benefit requests. This guidance is effective immediately,” adds the release.

Immigration attorneys are taken aback by this release and many fear that applicants could face visa denials or revocation of existing visas based on online activity that is taken out of context.

Rajiv S. Khanna, an immigration attorney said, “The guidance is vaguely worded. Even the most innocent statement by someone expressing an honest opinion could be taken to be a violation of the government’s interpretation of acceptable norms.”

““First amendment rights are available to everybody in the US, not just US citizens,” he added.

Elissa Taub, an immigration attorney said, “Our country’s vetting of applicants for these statuses (aka students, green card applicants, non-immigrant workers) already looks for and keeps out suspected terrorists. The government already has the power to review social media accounts. Announcing this policy, the way USCIS did is aggressive. It provides no guardrails or standards for the administration’s’ persecution of people whose opinions they don’t like...”

The USCIS release adds that :Consistent with President Trump’s executive orders on Combating anti-semitism, Additional measures to combat anti-semitism and Protecting the United States from foreign terrorists and other national security and public safety threats, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will enforce all relevant immigration laws to the maximum degree, to protect the homeland from extremists and terrorist aliens,

including those who support antisemitic terrorism, violent antisemitic ideologies and antisemitic terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, or Ansar Allah aka: “the Houthis.”

“There is no room in the United States for the rest of the world’s terrorist sympathizers, and we are under no obligation to admit them or let them stay here,” said Tricia McLaughlin, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at DHS. “Secretary Noem has made it clear that anyone who thinks they can come to America and hide behind the First Amendment to advocate for anti-Semitic violence and terrorism – think again. You are not welcome here,” her statement said.