

Trump's "Shithole" Countries: US Bans Haiti, Belize and Samoa From Temporary Visas

The decision by Homeland Security was announced less than a week after Trump asked why the U.S. had to take in immigrants from "shithole" countries

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Global Research, January 18, 2018
[teleSUR](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#),
[Oceania, USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

*The Department of Homeland Security announced Wednesday that Belize, Haiti and Samoa will no longer be eligible for temporary work visas. The announcement is scheduled to be published by the Federal Register on Thursday, exactly a week after U.S. **President Donald Trump** referred to African nations and Haiti as "shithole" countries during an Oval Office meeting on immigration reform.*

During the meeting where the president discussed the status of the roughly 800,000 immigrants who had benefited from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA, by shielding them from deportation, which was terminated by his administration, Trump had reportedly questioned why the U.S. needs to take in immigrants from "shithole" countries, rather than from countries like Norway sparking criticism by lawmakers and social and political actors who slammed Trump's racism and overall immigration policies.

The H-2A and H-2B visas given to seasonal workers in agriculture and other industries are available to citizens of 80 countries. Haiti had been included in that list since 2012, after a successful lobbying campaign by humanitarian groups and both Republican and Democratic lawmakers to make Haiti eligible for short-term worker visas that could help Haitians recover from the catastrophic 2010 earthquake.

DHS's official notice provides reasons for the elimination of each country. In the case of Belize the notice cites concerns over human trafficking and for Samoa it claims the Samoan government does not cooperate in accepting back their nationals once they've been ordered to leave the U.S..

For Haiti, the document claims the measure was taken due to a "high rate of overstaying the terms," and to recipients' "historically demonstrated high levels of fraud and abuse."

DHS's reason to ban Haitians from the visas does not hold up. According to Reuters, a 2016 DHS report claims that only 65 Haitians entered the United States on H-2A visas for agricultural work, and an amount "too low to report" entered on H-2B visas for non-agricultural seasonal work during the 2016 fiscal year.

This is not the first immigration measure taken by the Trump administration that affects Haitians. In November 2017, the DHS announced its decision to terminate the Temporary Protected Status granted to Haiti under the former President Barack Obama on Jan. 21, 2010

as an immediate response to the Jan. 12 earthquake.

The measure had allowed 59,000 Haitians to stay in the U.S. legally but it will expire this Monday, leaving many Haitian immigrants under threat of deportation.

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