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U.S. State Department Halts Gaza Visitor Visas

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The U.S. State Department announced on Saturday that it has temporarily suspended the issuance of visitor visas for individuals from Gaza while it conducts what it described as “a full and thorough review.” The decision has drawn both criticism and support across political and advocacy groups.

The department confirmed that only a limited number of temporary medical-humanitarian visas had been issued in recent days, but did not provide an exact figure. According to the State Department’s website, more than 3,800 B1/B2 visitor visas were granted in 2025 to

holders of Palestinian Authority (PA) travel documents, which cover residents of both the West Bank and Gaza. That total included 640 visas issued in May. A breakdown between the two territories was not provided.

The policy shift follows public claims made on social media by Laura Loomer, a far-right activist and supporter of former President Donald Trump, who alleged that Palestinian “refugees” had entered the United States this month. Her remarks prompted responses from several Republican lawmakers. Representative Chip Roy of Texas said he would be seeking clarification from the administration, while Representative Randy Fine of Florida described the matter as a “national security risk.”

Several organizations voiced concern over the visa halt. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) criticized the suspension, calling it harmful to Palestinians seeking medical care. Meanwhile, the Palestine Children’s Relief Fund said the decision could block critically ill children from Gaza from accessing lifesaving treatment in the United States. The group stated, “This policy will have a devastating and irreversible impact on our ability to bring injured and critically ill children from Gaza to the United States for lifesaving medical treatment, a mission that has defined our work for more than 30 years.”

The backdrop to the visa suspension is the ongoing war in Gaza, which began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched an attack on Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, according to Israeli figures. Since then, Israel’s military campaign has resulted in the deaths of more than 61,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials.

The U.S. government has not signaled any willingness to accept Palestinians displaced by the conflict. However, Reuters has reported that discussions are underway between Israel and South Sudan on a possible plan to resettle Palestinians outside Gaza.

The State Department has not indicated when the review of Gaza visitor visas will be completed or whether exceptions for humanitarian cases will continue.