



Radical Changes in U.S. Immigration Policies

Update -- January 23, 2025

On November 5, 2024, Donald J. Trump was elected President of the United States for a four-year term, and he was inaugurated on January 20, 2025. Within the first few days after his inauguration, he announced radical changes in U.S. immigration policies and directives. Among other things, he announced the closing of America's southern border with Mexico to asylum seekers; the suspension of all refugee admissions; the removal of top career immigration officials; his intention that federal agents will enter previously safe churches and schools to apprehend undocumented migrants for deportation; his intention to prosecute local government officials who don't cooperate with his policies; and his undertaking to eliminate birthright citizenship -- that is, the automatic citizenship granted any child born on American soil, which is currently guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.

Pro-immigration advocates are likely to contest some of those orders and undertakings. Some, such as the elimination of birthright citizenship -- may be inherently difficult for Mr. Trump to achieve. But regardless of the outcomes, America has become far less hospitable to refugees and asylum seekers than it has been for a century. We now caution Eritreans who have escaped their country's brutal regime that they may have far greater obstacles than before in seeking asylum or refuge in the U.S.

Mr. Trump had previously been elected president in November 2016 and had served a four-year term, which had ended in 2021. In his first term as well, he had imposed severe restrictions on asylum opportunities and refugee admissions. But in his second term, the restrictions are expected to be broader, deeper, and more effectively implemented.

In addition to his anti-immigration promises and policies, in his second campaign for the presidency and since being elected and taking office for the second time, Mr. Trump for the most part has not indicated an interest in advancing international human rights -- an area in which the U.S. government has often strongly advocated since the end of World War II. Accordingly, it seems likely that the new Trump administration will pay less attention to advancing human rights in Eritrea and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa than the U.S. government has done in the past.

The America Team for Displaced Eritreans will attempt to update this notice from time to time.