

## Dominica and Antigua Move to Engage U.S. After New Visa Restrictions Announced

**U.S. visa restrictions effective Jan. 1, 2026 apply only to select countries, including Dominica and Antigua, not the wider Caribbean, as leaders push back and seek urgent clarification while valid visas remain unaffected.**

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**Aerial view of Redcliffe Quay and St. John's, the capital of Antigua and Barbuda, along the Caribbean Sea.**

The governments of Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda have begun urgent diplomatic engagement with United States officials following a White House proclamation issued on December 16, 2025, which will impose partial U.S. visa restrictions on nationals of both countries

beginning January 1, 2026.

The measures are part of a broader U.S. policy action that applies only to specific countries identified by U.S. authorities based on screening, vetting, and immigration-compliance assessments. The proclamation does not apply uniformly across the Caribbean, and several Caribbean nations remain unaffected.

### **Dominica Acknowledges Restrictions, Seeks Clarification**

In a statement issued Tuesday from Roseau, the Government of Dominica confirmed that it had been formally notified of the U.S. decision to impose partial travel restrictions on Dominican nationals, effective at the start of the new year.

The government acknowledged that the announcement may cause concern and said the matter is being treated “with the utmost seriousness and urgency.”

To address the situation, Dominica said it is actively engaging officials at the United States Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados, seeking formal clarification on the scope of the restrictions, the basis for their implementation, and the specific implications for Dominican travelers, students, families, and other legitimate U.S. visa holders.

The government stated that it will continue working closely with U.S. authorities to protect the interests of Dominican citizens and ensure accurate public information, noting that further updates will be provided once additional details are confirmed.

### **Antigua and Barbuda Expresses Disappointment, Disputes Basis for Inclusion**

In a separate statement, Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda said his government was “deeply disappointed” that Antigua and Barbuda had been included in the U.S. proclamation, which suspends the issuance of U.S. visas to Antiguan nationals effective 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2026.

The proclamation cites Antigua and Barbuda’s Citizenship by Investment Programme (CIP) as historically operating without a residency requirement — a claim the prime minister said “does not reflect the present reality of our laws.”

According to Prime Minister Browne, Antigua and Barbuda has spent the past year working closely with multiple departments of the U.S. government to strengthen safeguards within its CIP, engaging in good faith, accepting recommendations, and taking concrete steps to ensure the programme presents no security risk to the United States.

He noted that Parliament has recently enacted comprehensive new legislation strengthening due diligence, transparency, information-sharing, and enforcement within the programme. Crucially, the new law introduces a mandatory 30-day physical residency requirement in Antigua and Barbuda as a condition for qualification for citizenship.

“It is therefore an error to state that Antigua and Barbuda’s Citizenship by Investment Programme operates without a residency requirement,” the prime minister said.

### **Diplomatic Engagement Underway**

Prime Minister Browne said that immediately following issuance of the proclamation, Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States, Sir Ronald Sanders, contacted the U.S. Department of State and was informed that State Department officials were themselves surprised by the proclamation and had received no prior notice.

Ambassador Sanders has since initiated arrangements for urgent, high-level engagement with the State Department and the White House to clarify the matter, present updated facts, and begin the process of restoring normal visa access for Antiguan citizens.

In parallel, Prime Minister Browne said he is writing directly to President Donald J. Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, offering full cooperation to address U.S. concerns and take all reasonable steps necessary to restore all visa categories.

### **Longstanding Bilateral Ties Emphasized**

Antigua and Barbuda underscored the depth of its relationship with the United States, describing it as one that predates independence and is grounded in long-standing friendship, shared democratic values, and strong people-to-people connections. The United States remains Antigua and Barbuda's most significant trading partner and continues to enjoy a consistent trade surplus with the country.

Both governments emphasized that they are seeking clarification, engagement, and resolution, not confrontation, and stressed their commitment to maintaining strong bilateral relations with Washington.

### **Targeted Policy, Not a Regional Ban**

U.S. officials have characterized the proclamation as country-specific, applying different levels of restriction based on data related to document integrity, visa overstay rates, information-sharing practices, and national-security assessments.

While Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda are among the countries affected by partial restrictions, the policy does not represent a blanket action against the Caribbean, nor does it revoke visas already issued to lawful travelers who qualify under existing exemptions outlined by U.S. authorities.