



USCIS Refugee Memo – Summary of Key Provisions

Effective immediately, USCIS is ordering:

- A total freeze on **all** pending Form I-485 applications filed by refugees admitted from Jan 20, 2021 – Feb 20, 2025
- A mandatory **re-interview** of all principal refugees admitted during that period
- A review and potential re-interview of **derivative refugees**, including spouses, children, and follow-to-join beneficiaries
- A reassessment of whether each refugee **met the definition at the time of admission**

Authority being invoked:

- INA § 101(a)(42) (refugee definition)
- INA § 207 and § 209 (termination and adjustment authority)
- USCIS asserts power to undo past refugee admissions

Consequences:

- USCIS may **terminate refugee status** for principals and all derivatives
- USCIS may **deny green cards**, even for those who already have them
- There is **no appeal** of a denied refugee-based I-485; the only option is to contest removal in immigration court
- Refugees placed in removal proceedings may renew their I-485 claim before an immigration judge

Additional conditions:

- USCIS has **90 days** to create the priority list for who will be re-interviewed
- The freeze on I-485s remains until lifted in a future memo
- Only the **USCIS Director or Deputy Director** may authorize exceptions
- USCIS is explicitly framing this as correcting “expediency,” “quantity over quality,” and “vulnerabilities” in Biden-era adjudications
- The memo states USCIS will revisit **all inadmissibility grounds**, including those previously waived
- The memo highlights a review of the **persecutor bar**
- It asserts a need to ensure refugees “pose no threat to national security or public safety”