

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretaries Rubio and Mullin:

We write with concern regarding reports of Israel's potential noncompliance with the reciprocity requirements of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

As you know, the VWP enables citizens and nationals of participating countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. Countries seeking designation must meet a range of requirements established by Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended by the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Act of 2007 and the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015. Among these requirements is that participating countries extend visa-free privileges to all U.S. citizens without regard to national origin, religion, or ethnicity.

In 2023, the U.S. determined that Israel met the requirements for participation in the VWP and welcomed it as the 41st country to join the program. At the time, the Departments of State and Homeland Security made clear that Israel's admission into the program did not end U.S. oversight of its compliance.¹ The Departments stated that the U.S. Government would continue to engage with the Government of Israel while monitoring its continued implementation of all program requirements, including its reciprocity commitments. Since then, there have been numerous reports of American citizens who meet the requirements for visa-free travel being denied entry to Israel.

We have become aware of reports that American travelers have been denied entry into Israel based on their Palestinian heritage, identity, or affiliation with organizations that peacefully advocate for Palestinian rights. An American woman from Austin, Texas, was reportedly traveling with her husband and three children to Tel Aviv to attend a cousin's wedding when Israeli authorities separated her from her family, questioned her about her Palestinian heritage, confiscated her U.S. passport, and searched her phone. Israeli authorities ultimately denied her entry and issued her a five-year ban from entering Israel. This is one of numerous reported cases involving American travelers of Palestinian heritage who have been denied entry into Israel under circumstances that raise concerns about discriminatory treatment.

¹ [Joint Statement on the Designation of Israel into the Visa Waiver Program - United States Department of State](#)

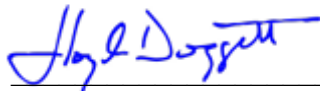
These reports raise serious questions about whether Israel is meeting its reciprocal obligations under the VWP and whether Israeli authorities are selectively denying entry to U.S. citizens based on their perceived or actual Palestinian identity. Discriminatory treatment of American citizens based on national origin, ethnicity, religion, or Palestinian identity would be inconsistent with the commitments Israel made in order to participate in the program and warrants thorough investigation.

We respectfully ask that your Departments engage with the Government of Israel regarding these reports and seek an explanation for the denial of entry to these American citizens. We also ask that you seek the reversal of the five-year entry ban imposed on the American citizen described above. We further ask that the Departments assess Israel's compliance with its reciprocity commitments under the VWP and take appropriate steps to ensure that Israel is meeting the requirements of the program.

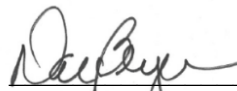
The VWP provides significant benefits to both the United States and participating countries, but participation also carries important responsibilities. Israel must be held to the same standards and requirements that apply to all VWP participants, including its commitment to provide reciprocal treatment to U.S. citizens without regard to national origin, religion, or ethnicity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress