

EXHIBIT 1

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POLITICS

Trump Administration Punishes Countries That Refuse to Take Back Deported Citizens

By RON NIXON SEPT. 13, 2017

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has imposed visa sanctions against four countries that have refused to take back citizens who were convicted of crimes in the United States and ordered deported, officials said on Wednesday.

The Department of Homeland Security said it notified the State Department that the governments of Cambodia, Eritrea, Guinea and Sierra Leone had denied or unreasonably delayed accepting the return of convicts. American diplomats in the countries were ordered to impose visa restrictions, officials said in a statement, but did not say what types of visas would be affected.

“International law obligates each country to accept the return of its nationals ordered removed from the United States,” said Elaine Duke, the acting secretary of Homeland Security. “Cambodia, Eritrea, Guinea, and Sierra Leone have failed in that responsibility.”

Officials said the restrictions would remain in place until the countries cooperate.

The issue has been a longstanding problem for officials at Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency charged with deportations.

They say other nations will often refuse to issue travel documents or delay providing them. In turn, agency officials said, they are forced to release criminals, including those who have committed assaults and murders, in the United States. A 2001 Supreme Court ruling barred the government from detaining immigrants indefinitely simply for lack of a country willing to take them.

The Obama administration was criticized for not using its authority to impose visa sanctions against countries that refused to work with American officials to deport immigrants with criminal convictions.

In one of the most recent examples, ICE officials had to release in 2012 a Haitian immigrant, Jean Jacques, who had served time for attempted murder; Haitian officials blocked his deportation because they said Mr. Jacques could not prove that he was a citizen. In June 2015, he stabbed to death Casey Chadwick, a 25-year-old woman from Norwich, Conn., and he was sentenced last year to 60 years in prison in a case that received widespread attention.

President Trump, who campaigned on cracking down on illegal immigration, had promised to punish countries that refused to take back their citizens and signed an executive order in January directing the departments of State and Homeland Security to suspend visas from countries that refused to take back their citizens.

Immigration officials said the sanctions send a message to the holdout nations.

“American citizens have been harmed because foreign governments refuse to take back their citizens,” said Thomas Homan, the acting director of ICE. “These sanctions will ensure that the problem these countries pose will get no worse as ICE continues its work to remove dangerous criminals from the United States.”

Homeland Security officials said about 700 Eritrean nationals in the United States are subject to final orders of removal, but Eritrean officials have refused to cooperate. More than 1,900 Cambodian nationals in the United States are subject to a final order of removal, and 1,412 have criminal convictions, officials said.

ICE officials say they have been forced to release about 2,137 Guinean and 831 Sierra Leone nationals, many with serious criminal convictions.

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