



United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

November 15, 2023

The Honorable  
Marco Rubio  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio:

Thank you for your October 15 letter to Secretary Blinken requesting the Department of State perform a full review and coordination effort to revoke the visas of those who have endorsed or espoused Hamas' terrorist activity on U.S. soil, per 8 U.S.C 1182.

As you are aware, the Secretary of State designated Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) on October 8, 1997. Our first priority when adjudicating visa applications is to ensure applicants do not pose a security risk to the United States. Every prospective traveler to the United States undergoes extensive security screening. This screening draws on information from the full range of U.S. government agencies, including biographic and biometric screening against U.S. law enforcement and counterterrorism databases. No visa is issued until all concerns raised by this screening process are fully resolved.

The Department of State also has broad authority under the INA to revoke visas. We exercise that authority when there is information or evidence indicating a visa holder may be ineligible for a U.S. visa. When we receive derogatory information that indicates potential visa ineligibility, we take immediate actions, such as entering the information into U.S. government databases and revoking visas if deemed appropriate.

Even after issuance of a visa, the Department of State works closely with the Department of Homeland Security and other partner agencies to ensure every visa applicant is continuously screened to ensure they remain eligible for travel to the United States.

The Department shares your outrage regarding Hamas' brutal attack against the State of Israel and its citizens. We remain committed to ensuring the safety and security of the United States.

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naz Durakoğlu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and a long, sweeping underline.

Naz Durakoğlu  
Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Legislative Affairs