

US government suspends humanitarian visa program



Right now no longer an option for Cubans willing to leave the country: the humanitarian parole program (Source: [bastamanography/Flickr](#))

The United States has [temporarily suspended](#) the issuing of travel permits as part of its *humanitarian parole* program. This was reported by several US media outlets on Friday, citing a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The reason for this measure was an internal report that uncovered significant levels of fraud. Since mid-July, advance travel authorizations for the programme have no longer been issued and applications from sponsors suspected of fraud are subject to a thorough review.

"DHS takes any abuse of its procedures very seriously," spokeswoman Erin Heeter said in a statement. "Out of an abundance of caution, DHS has temporarily suspended the issuance of extended travel authorizations for new beneficiaries while it conducts a review of supporter applications. DHS will resume processing applications as soon as possible, with appropriate safeguards in place."

The report revealed that Social Security numbers, addresses, and phone numbers appear to have been used multiple times in the application forms, in some cases hundreds of times. For example, 100,948 forms had been completed by 3218 serial sponsors appearing on 20 or more forms. Numbers of deceased persons were also among the most frequently used.

Also striking were around 100 postal addresses, which were used between 124 and 739 times in over 19,000 forms, including warehouse addresses. In addition, telephone numbers of sponsors were submitted in more than 2,000 forms, and non-existent postal codes of sponsors were indicated in 2,839 forms.

So-called sponsors (who vouch for humanitarian visa applicants) must undergo a background and security check and prove that they have the financial means to support the person they are sponsoring.

The humanitarian admission program was introduced for Venezuelans in October 2022 and extended to Haitians, Nicaraguans and Cubans in January 2023. It allows up to 30,000 people per month to enter the USA, provided they meet certain conditions. By the end of June, 106,757 Cubans had benefited from the program and around 104,130 had already entered the USA. Around 1.6 million applicants were waiting for approval to enter the USA.

The resumption of application processing is to take place as soon as possible "under appropriate security precautions", but an exact date has not yet been given. A lawsuit against the program was dismissed earlier this year, but the plaintiff states intend to appeal. ([Cubaheute](#))