

U.S. immigration agency secretly revokes university students' immigration statuses

Image not found or type unknown



Washington, March 31 (RHC)-- A recent investigation has uncovered a trend of the U.S. Immigration Agency discreetly revoking the immigration statuses of university students without their knowledge or the awareness of their educational institutions.

Zeteo, a U.S.-based media organization founded by British-American journalist Mehdi Hasan, reported on Sunday that targeted students hail from the Middle East and Muslim-majority countries.

They've also reported inconsistent notification patterns: some students have been informed about the revocations by the government, some have not; some only found out after officials manually checked internal visa status databases, while universities and officials themselves have mostly seemed to not be informed by the government.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) appears to be manually revoking students' immigration status – an authority typically left to university staff. And some students and universities are not even being made aware of those revocations, setting students up to be taken by immigration agents without even knowing it was coming.

“Never seen something like this,” Zeteo quoted university officials as saying about the secret targeting of Middle Eastern students in the past week, as the administration of US President Donald Trump tightens the noose on pro-Palestinian activists.

Zeteo said it appears the Trump administration is quietly targeting even more students for deportation and doing so in a way that is taking universities and the students themselves completely by surprise.

Samah Sisay, a legal expert of the Center for Constitutional Rights, told Zeteo that one's visa being revoked does not mean that their status would be too.

Unlike student visas, which are entry documents that allow someone to enter the country, student statuses are what allow people to stay in the US. To maintain one's status, a student has to fulfill certain requirements, like being properly enrolled in classes, keeping documents up to date, and following work restrictions.

The attorney said a student's visa could expire or be revoked for any number of reasons, but that wouldn't necessarily mean their status to stay would be taken away, too.

Some of these statuses, which are typically overseen by university officers, are now allegedly being unilaterally revoked by ICE instead. While university officers often oversee status in the SEVIS system, Sisay said that the US Department of Homeland Security can technically revoke status without a university actively disenrolling a student.

Still, the practice is alarming students and university staff across the country. As one official put it, “Someone at ICE pushed a button, and now [students] are ‘illegal’ through a process that absolutely should not be happening.”

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Thursday that 300 student visas have been revoked. “We have a right” to rescind the visas of students who participate in campus protests, he said, despite questions about due process and First Amendment objections.

Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate who became a leader of pro-Palestinian protests on the campus, was arrested on March 8 by ICE agents. A federal district court judge has disputed the legality of the Trump administration's case against Khalil.

Since his detention, he has been kept in custody at one of ICE's main detention facilities located in Louisiana. Federal Judge Jesse Furman in New York has blocked the efforts by the Trump administration to deport Khalil.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/379832-us-immigration-agency-secretly-revokes-university-students-immigration-statuses>



Radio Habana Cuba