

Biden, Like Trump, Breaks International Law, Violating UN Neutrality by Blocking Countries

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In a blatant violation of international law and its 1947 hosting agreement, the US government has blocked numerous countries from participating in events at the UN headquarters in New York City.

The Biden administration is banning Russian diplomats, while the Trump administration illegally prohibited top officials from Venezuela and Iran.

Reuters reported on September 2 that Russia has filed a formal complaint with the United Nations, after the US government has “been constantly [refusing to grant entry visas](#)” to [Russian diplomats](#) to participate in events at the UN headquarters, Moscow’s ambassador said.

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his delegation have been denied entry to the United States, barring them from the UN.

This Joe Biden administration policy, which flagrantly violates international law, was likewise implemented by the Donald Trump administration.

In January 2020, Foreign Policy reported that [Trump had banned Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif](#) from addressing the UN Security Council in New York, after Washington assassinated top Iranian official Qasem Soleimani, in an illegal act of war.

Foreign Policy wrote,

“The Iranian government was awaiting word on the visa Monday (January 6) when a Trump administration official phoned U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres to inform him that the United States would not allow Zarif into the country.”

The outlet noted that this US policy violates “the terms of a 1947 headquarters agreement

requiring Washington to permit foreign officials into the country to conduct U.N. business.”

Exclusive: Trump administration bars top Iranian diplomat from addressing U.N. Security Council, in breach of U.S.-U.N. host country agreement, FP's [@columlynch](#) and [@RobbieGramer](#) report. <https://t.co/c9Pb9aqK1d>

— Foreign Policy (@ForeignPolicy) [January 6, 2020](#)

In April 2020, the US government similarly barred Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro from speaking at the United Nations.

A Justice Department spokesperson told CNN that [Maduro would be “arrested immediately”](#) if he stepped foot on US territory.

“Nicolás Maduro will be arrested if he is in the United States,” the spokesperson said, in remarks reported in the Spanish-language press. “The government of the United States does not recognize him as head of state. Executive immunity does not apply to him.”

The Justice Department spokesperson threateningly added that “Maduro would face a mandatory minimum sentencing of 50 years in prison and a maximum of life in prison.”

This policy also blatantly violated international law. The United Nations always recognized Maduro as the one and only legitimate president of Venezuela.

Moreover, even at the peak of the US-led coup attempt against Venezuela in 2019, more than two-thirds of UN member states – the vast majority of the international community – still recognized Maduro as Venezuela's president, not US-appointed coup leader Juan Guaidó.

EEUU advirtió sobre el "arresto inmediato" de Nicolás Maduro si llega a pisar su territorio <https://t.co/nCbnEZs9Lh>

— infobae (@infobae) [April 16, 2020](#)

Foreign Policy magazine made it clear that this illegal US behavior is official, systematic government policy, in another report published in November 2019.

Titled “[Trump Turns U.N. Visas, Travel Restrictions Into Foreign-Policy Cudgel](#),” the article noted, “If you're deemed hostile to U.S. interests, you may face travel limitations, arbitrary visa denials, sudden airport checks, and other forms of harassment, diplomats say.”

Foreign Policy wrote:

The decision to withhold federal protection for a senior Syrian official is just one among a growing number of diplomatic slights experienced by delegates from a handful of countries with poor relations with the United States during their travels to New York City for United Nations meetings. It reflects the punitive nature of U.S. foreign policy under President Donald Trump, whose administration has sought myriad ways to sanction or penalize individuals and countries that are viewed as hostile to the United States, or

that simply refuse to comply with U.S. demands. It reinforces the perception among some diplomats that the United States has contempt for the United Nations.

“Not exactly a high point in U.S. diplomacy,” said Larry Johnson, an American lawyer who previously served as the U.N. assistant secretary-general for legal affairs.

Johnson, an adjunct professor at Columbia University Law School, said it’s not the first time the United States has “resorted to delaying tactics and harassment” to keep unwanted foreigners out of the country. But he said Washington has acted under “weak or no legal grounds” in denying access to U.N. headquarters.

Representatives from the U.N. delegations of China, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, North Korea, Russia, and Syria say their diplomats and support staff are subjected to increasingly restrictive travel limitations, arbitrary denial of visas and driver’s licenses, additional airport security checks, and curtailed access to banking services needed to conduct their diplomatic work and pay their dues at the U.N., according to a report by a U.N. committee that monitors U.S. dealings with the U.N.’s 192 other states.

Those measures, they contend, violate the host country treaty, or Headquarters Agreement, signed by the United States in 1947. In many cases, the U.N.’s lawyers agree. In an Oct. 15 statement, the U.N. legal counsel told the committee that U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres is “concerned” by recent measures, including the rejection of a visa for a Russian national hired by the United Nations and new travel restrictions imposed on the Iranian delegation and foreign minister after Tehran refused to participate in talks with Washington. The statement said the U.N. was maintaining its long-standing position that the United States lacks legal authority to impose travel restrictions on states in retaliation for restrictions on U.S. diplomats serving in those countries. “There is no room for the application of measures based on reciprocity,” according to the statement.

The lengthy claims of diplomatic retaliation are included in a 64-page report of the U.N. host committee that details a range of matters that bear on U.S. relations with the diplomatic community in New York.

Diplomats coming from countries considered hostile to U.S. interests have been experiencing travel limitations, arbitrary visa denials, sudden airport checks, and other forms of harassment, [@columlynch](https://t.co/FVtItVB6jI) reports. <https://t.co/FVtItVB6jI>

— Foreign Policy (@ForeignPolicy) [November 6, 2019](#)

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