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## GC Session 2025 Update: Important US Travel Advice from the General Conference Office

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From Torika Laweloa <TorikaLaweloa@adventist.org.au>

Date Tue 8/04/2025 1:19 PM

To Torika Laweloa <TorikaLaweloa@adventist.org.au>

Cc Megan Lillo <MeganLillo@adventist.org.au>; SPD Secretariat <SPDSecretariat@adventist.org.au>

 3 attachments (342 KB)

GC Session Travel Advisory.pdf; Guidance For All International Travellers.pdf; Welcome Email\_GC Session Delegates.pdf;

Dear Delegate/Special Guest,

**This email and its attachments are being shared on behalf of the General Conference Office. It is essential that you thoroughly read and understand the information provided.**

The current White House administration is poised to implement travel restrictions affecting citizens from up to 43 countries. This Presidential Executive Order can be implemented without prior notice and thereby potentially impacting many foreigners coming not the United States. It is therefore prudent for the General Conference of the Seventh day Adventist Church to take a proactive stance in mitigating probable challenges for those that are set to come into the United States.

The recommendations and guidance contained within this email are essential in effectively navigating the complexities that may arise. The intent here is to proactively mitigate the potential of an international traveler being detained or denied entry into the country.

It is prudent to have a well-written formal invitation letter that highlights, as best as possible, the particulars/activities taking place for the upcoming meetings including the location and dates of attendance. That invitation letter should be utilized not only to obtain visas but also as confirmation to be readily shown to a US Border Custom agent on arrival at the United States, should the traveler be questioned about the purpose of their visit. The traveler should carry several copies of this letter, as well as proof of hotel reservations and return flights.

Attached please find:

- a. A guidance document for all international travellers (including spouse and children) to follow prior to entering the United States.
- b. A US travel advisory.

Blessings,  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Please note: If you have **not** requested an invitation letter on the event portal, you may use the initial registration email received from [events@adventistevents.org](mailto:events@adventistevents.org) undersigned by Elder Erton Kohler. (a sample of the email is also attached)

## GC Session 2025 Travel Advisory

**Subject:** Important US Travel Advisory

**Date:** 08 April 2025

Dear SPD Delegate/Special Guest

Due to recent reports that some individuals with approved visas were denied entry into the US and that a pending White House executive order on travel restrictions is set to go into effect soon, we want to provide you with information and guidance to assist in your travel preparations.

Reports indicate that the White House administration is reviewing potential restrictions that categorize countries into three specific groups, as outlined below.

1. **Full Visa Suspension (Red):** Ten countries—Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen—may face a complete halt on issuing U.S. visas. This suspension would prevent their citizens from traveling to the U.S. for any purpose, including tourism, business trips, or education.
2. **Partial Visa Suspension (Orange):** A second category, including Belarus, Eritrea, Haiti, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Turkmenistan, would experience partial visa restrictions. These limitations might specifically affect tourist, student, and immigrant visas, though certain exemptions may be available.
3. **Probationary Period (Yellow):** The third group consists of 26 countries, notably Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe. These countries would receive a 60-day period to address concerns regarding security and vetting processes. Failure to comply adequately could result in partial visa suspensions.

The list of countries under review remains fluid and is subject to final approval from top U.S. officials that include the Secretary of State.

It is therefore recommended that all international travelers **(a)** read the travel guidance that has been shared, including family members **(b)** review the latest travel advisories from official sources within your country of origin. **(c)** consult with the U.S. embassy or consulate in your country for personalized guidance.

We are committed to supporting all our church leaders and will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

Blessings,

Seventh day Adventist Church

## **INFORMATION - GUIDANCE FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS (SPOUSES AND CHILDREN)**

### **Searches by U.S. Custom Agents**

- Custom Border Patrol (CBP) agents have the legal authority to search electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices) at the border or port of entry without a warrant. This includes all files, documents, emails, contacts, and photos. While these searches are part of standard security measures, they are intrusive.
- Travelers should know that any sensitive, confidential, or personal data/information (i.e.: documents, photos, text messages, etc.) on a traveler's electronic devices may be exposed during a search. So, travelers should take notice of the privacy risks involved in such searches.
- If a traveler is asked to unlock their device, they should remain calm, respectful, and cooperative. Avoid being combative or uncooperative as this is likely to worsen the situation. While the traveler does have the right to refuse, this may result in the device being temporarily seized for further inspection and possibly being denied entry into the country.
- If a traveler is uncomfortable or unsure about the request, ask to speak to a supervisor or an attorney before unlocking the device.
- If CBP agents believe that the devices may contain suspicious material or if you refuse to unlock them, they have the right to seize your devices for further inspection. The item may be kept for days or weeks.
- If your device is seized, always ask for a receipt or a written acknowledgment that your device has been taken and the reason for the seizure. Travelers should understand that the seizure of devices could cause delays in their ability to proceed with their travel plans. If a traveler needs to access critical information on a device, it is prudent to have backup plans in place.
- If a traveler's device is searched or seized, they should document the experience, including the names of all the officers involved, badge numbers, the time, date, and place. They should include details of any interactions as this will be helpful if legal assistance is required later.
- If a traveler feels their rights have been violated or if they are subjected to unreasonable searches or seizures, they should immediately contact their church liaison or an attorney.

### **Electronic Devices**

- To minimize the chances of a search, carry only the essential electronic devices needed for the trip and meetings; avoid unnecessary electronic devices, as well as portable storage drives
- Before traveling, remove all nonessential files, data, documents, apps, or personal records that are not needed for the trip. Back up all important files and data on your electronic devices and save to a secure cloud storage or external hard drive. This ensures that even if your device is temporarily seized or data is accessed, you won't lose valuable information. It also reduces the volume of private data that is exposed during a possible inspection.
- When possible, avoid carrying sensitive information such as passwords, financial data, personal communications, or confidential work files on devices that one brings into the U.S. If one must carry sensitive confidential information, it should be encrypted.
- Passwords/PINS should be updated on all devices to prevent unauthorized access. Enable two-factor authentication on accounts that can support it (email, cloud services, banking apps, etc.). This adds an extra layer of security to one's accounts and ensures that even if one's device is compromised, the information remains secure.

**From:** [events@adventistevents.org](mailto:events@adventistevents.org)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Delegate Registration  
**Date:** Monday, 29 July 2024 5:11:10 PM

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CAUTION: External email



Dear ,

This is to certify that you have been selected as a delegate to the 62nd Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The meetings will be held on July 3-12, 2025, at the America's Center Convention Complex, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Delegates to the 62nd General Conference Session are selected or appointed based on criteria set forth in the Constitution and By-Laws of the General Conference which enumerates several kinds of delegates/invitees and their selection/approval process. Part of this process considers their dedicated service and spiritual commitment to the Church as an employee or lay member.

The General Conference holds quinquennial sessions to elect the world leadership of the Church and to transact Church business as well as to worship together as an international family. Since about ninety percent of the delegates reside outside of the United States, lack of their participation could preclude the Church from doing business at the meeting.

As this is the quinquennial business session of the General Conference, the General Conference as provided for in the bylaws, convenes the session and notifies its constituent members of the dates and location so that they may send their appointed delegates and invited guests. The sponsoring organization of the delegate and invitee bears financial responsibility for all the travel and hotel arrangements and related expenses.

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a delegate. We look forward to a highly spiritual meeting as we work together to advance the mission of the Church.

Sincerely yours,

**Erton C Köhler**

General Conference Of The Seventh-Day Adventists

Executive Secretary

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## **Registration Process**

I consent to receiving electronic communications from the event "62nd General Conference Session" including Registration Application forms, information on sessions and programs.

Yes, I agree. Continue with the registration.

No. I don't want to register.

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Torika Laweloa  
Coordinator: 62nd General Conference Session - Delegate

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