



ADC stands with the Yemenis and all those that are affected.

**THE PRICE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM:
THE PLIGHT OF ARAB DIVERSITY VISA LOTTERY
WINNERS**

The U.S. Department of State's (DOS) Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) program makes available **50,000 immigrant visas annually** through a lottery process. DVs are distributed among six geographic regions, with no country receiving more than seven percent of available visas.

Countries eligible for DVs are generally **some of the poorest countries in the world**, and must not have sent more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States in the past five years. Currently, **all six of the countries** affected by the Trump administration's Arab and Muslim Ban—Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen—are eligible for DVs.

To qualify as a candidate for a DV, an applicant must demonstrate, at minimum, **a high school education or its equivalent, or two years of work experience** in an occupation requiring at least two years of training or experience to perform. Though only 50,000 DVs may be awarded each year, **the lottery initially selects 100,000 applicants** with the expectation that many will be determined ineligible for visas during the interview and continuing application process.

At present, **over 100 DV winners** from Yemen are currently waiting in Malaysia, hoping to complete the DV process:

- More than half of these DV winners are still in the administrative processing stage of their applications, **awaiting** their interviews with DOS.
 - DV winners now find themselves in a **race against the clock** to complete their applications and interviews before the DVs expire on September 30, 2017.
 - Despite this pending expiration date, DV winners are constantly met with **unaccountable delays**, stranded in a foreign country **with little to no money or connections and no home to return to in Yemen**.
- The **remaining DV winners** have had their application outright rejected following their interviews. Of these rejections, most are done on the grounds of **"invalid petition."** When DV winners ask what "invalid petition" means, the response from DOS's employees is "I am just not convinced." The "invalid petition" standard has come to merely be an excuse that DOS relies upon to discriminate against individuals from the countries identified in the Arab and Muslim Ban.
 - DV winners are now being asked to demonstrate a **"bona fide relationship"** with a person or entity in the United States, as is required by the Arab and Muslim Ban. This **inexcusably** allows the Ban to alter the

requirements of the DV process, introducing a step that is not part of the DV checklist.

The DV selection process is designed to grant green cards to **educated and skilled individuals** whose admission into the U.S. will add value to society and who lack any other paths into the country. In denying DVs to Yemenis, **consular officers are denying the best and the brightest of Yemen**, refusing **engineers, business owners, and doctoral candidates**.

Although there is no initial cost to apply for the DV program, once an applicant has been chosen as a DV winner, he/she **may incur extraordinary costs** in the course of trying to secure a visa. These costs are incredible and most of the time require DV winners to **sell everything** they own just to move, briefly, to countries where their DV interviews will be conducted. Others, with very little to sell off, take out enormous loans in the hopes that if they can secure a DV they will be able to pay back their debt.

PERSONAL STORY:

*One DV winner borrowed a massive amount of money from friends around the world (because no one in his family had a steady income) in order to travel to Malaysia for his interviews. As a **PhD candidate in India**, he left his position in his program to first return to Yemen and gather the required documentation for his DV application. After making it to Malaysia, he waited for **51 days**, spending borrowed money to cover costs of housing and food until his interview. Eventually the DV winner returned to India after conducting his interview only to be informed weeks later that he could not demonstrate a "**bona fide relationship**" with an entity in the U.S. and was therefore ineligible for a visa. Given his absence from his PhD program, the degree this DV winner put on hold in hopes of a better education in the U.S. may now be delayed, causing him further costs. This DV winner also now has a huge debt he must pay off without any clear means for doing so.*

DV winners may also be subject to **great bodily harm** as they travel through countries and areas where they may face violence or torture in order to reach their visa interviews.

PERSONAL STORY:

*One DV winner travelled through more than fifty security checkpoints on his way to Malaysia from Yemen, being **stopped and interrogated** as he crossed through areas of **armed conflict**, Egypt and Qatar. Though he arrived in Malaysia in December 2016 and has been told his visa has been granted, he has yet to receive his travel documents and lives on **one meal a day**.*