



Consular Affairs

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

CA Daily News Clips

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CA Daily News Clips – April 15, 2026

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Americans Abroad

[Kuwait detains American journalist Ahmed Shihab-Eldin: What to know \(AlMonitor\), 8 Articles](#)

Adam Lucente, AlMonitor
 April 14, 2026, 7 Articles

American-Kuwaiti journalist Ahmed Shihab-Eldin has been detained in Kuwait for weeks, according to press freedom advocates, amid a widening crackdown on wartime reporting in the Gulf state.

What happened: The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said that Shihab-Eldin, who was in Kuwait visiting family, has not been seen publicly or posted online since March 2. Authorities have charged him with spreading false information, harming national security and misusing his mobile phone, charges the press freedom organization called “vague and overly broad accusations that are routinely used to silence independent journalists.”

The CPJ called on Kuwaiti authorities to release Shihab-Eldin and drop the charges against him. The Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to Al-Monitor’s request for comment.

His detention prompted widespread criticism from journalists and activists on social media.

Shihab-Eldin had been posting about the impact of the war on Kuwait before he went offline. On March 2, he shared photos and videos of the US fighter jet that crashed in Kuwait on Substack. The content was not exclusive to Shihab-Eldin and appeared on other platforms.

The journalist also shared news pertaining to US and Israeli strikes on Iran as well as Iranian

strikes on Israel and the Gulf between the start of the war on Feb. 28 and March 2.

Who is he? Shihab-Eldin is based in the United States and has worked for a number of media outlets, including Al Jazeera, the New York Times and the BBC. The journalist's content is often critical of the Trump administration and Israel. In recent years, his reporting has not focused on Arab states, though he did produce a 2023 BBC documentary on the persecution of LGBTQ people by the Egyptian police.

Shihab-Eldin was born in the United States to Kuwaiti nationals of Palestinian origin. According to his website, his parents were forced to leave their homes in 1948 during the Arab-Israeli war. Kuwait has a Palestinian population of around 30,000, according to reports.

Why it matters: Kuwait has been cracking down on coverage of the war in recent weeks, seeking to limit what content can be shared. On March 4, the Information Ministry referred "several media law violators" for prosecution and two days earlier urged the public not to share any content related to strikes against the country, citing security reasons.

According to Reports Without Borders, another media watchdog, Kuwait's 2020 information law is regularly used to prohibit journalists from criticizing the government.

Kuwait has been targeted by hundreds of Iranian missiles and drones since the war began, causing the deaths of at least six US soldiers and one civilian. Kuwait Petroleum Corporation sites, the Ali Al Salem Air Base and the airport are among the areas to have been targeted.

Know more: Kuwait arrested six people in March accused of working with Hezbollah to plot assassinations. There have been at least three rounds of detentions targeting the Iran-backed Lebanese group in Kuwait during the war, with 26 people arrested on similar charges earlier in the month.

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[Prominent Journalist Ahmed Shihab-Eldin Detained in Kuwait as Gulf Cracks Down on Free Speech During Iran War \(Zeteo\), 8 Articles](#)

Minnah Arshad, Zeteo
April 14, 2026, 8 Articles

Human rights advocates are calling for Kuwait to immediately release prominent Kuwaiti-American journalist Ahmed Shihab-Eldin after he was arrested six weeks ago amid a wartime crackdown on press and speech.

Shihab-Eldin, a US citizen of Palestinian descent known for his excoriating commentary on Israel, was arrested in early March and has been in Kuwaiti detention since then without public justification. The Emmy-nominated journalist has previously worked with PBS, the New York Times, and Al Jazeera English.

“We call on Kuwait to release Ahmed Shihab-Eldin and drop all charges against him. Journalism is not a crime, and Shihab-Eldin’s case reflects a broader pattern of using national security laws to stifle scrutiny and control the narrative,” Sara Qudah, the Committee to Protect Journalists MENA regional director, said in an emailed statement.

Qudah told Zeteo over the phone that Shihab-Eldin was on a personal trip visiting family when he was arrested. On March 2, Shihab-Eldin shared photos and videos that had been published by CNN or were circulating online that showed a fighter jet crash over Kuwait near a US air base. The posts appeared to show a friendly fire incident where Kuwaiti air defenses shot down three US planes. No pilots were killed. Shihab-Eldin has not posted on social media since March 2.

Six weeks into his detention, Qudah said Shihab-Eldin’s charges have still not been made public, and Kuwaiti authorities have not responded to CPJ’s questions about Shihab-Eldin’s condition in prison and the grounds for his arrest. But she said it appears authorities have charged him with spreading false information, harming national security, and misusing his phone.

According to Drop Site, shortly after the war in Iran began, Kuwait’s Information Ministry published media “guidelines,” which include a ban on publishing or circulating “rumors, unverified news, or misleading information” or content that could offend “brotherly or friendly countries or that could harm Kuwait’s foreign relations.

CPJ called the unconfirmed charges “overly broad accusations that are routinely used to silence independent journalists.” The charges, if confirmed, carry a penalty of up to 10 years in prison, Qudah said.

UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese condemned the arrest on Tuesday, writing on social media that “journalism is not a crime.”

“One of the most gentle souls this genocide has brought into my life is Ahmed Shihab-Eldin, a journalist of rare strength, unwavering integrity, and deep compassion,” Albanese said.

A State Department spokesperson confirmed in an email to Zeteo that the department was aware of reports of an American detained in Kuwait. The spokesperson did not confirm whether the State Department was working on securing Shihab-Eldin’s release, but said that the Trump administration “has no higher priority than the safety and security of Americans.”

“Whenever an American is detained abroad, the Department works to provide consular assistance in accordance with our authorities under U.S. and international law,” the spokesperson said. “Due to privacy and other considerations, we have no further comment at this time.”

The Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington DC did not immediately return a request for comment.

Gulf-Wide Crackdown

Shihab-Eldin’s imprisonment comes as Gulf countries crack down on press freedoms. Across the Gulf, Qudah said hundreds of citizens have been arrested in recent weeks, simply for posting or reposting information on the war.

“Journalists are not being able to freely and safely report on what is happening inside their countries and in where they are working, which undermines their jobs and ... what the public needs in terms of receiving credible and factual information,” Qudah said.

In Kuwait specifically, authorities have already made dozens of arbitrary arrests over social media posts, according to the Gulf Centre for Human Rights. Sources reportedly confirmed to the organization that most of the people arrested were held in secret prisons for several days and were denied contact with their families or lawyers – a common tool of intimidation.

Recent arrests in Kuwait include Fareah Alsaqqaf and Suad Al-Munayes, two activists currently in custody without access to attorneys or clear information on the basis for their arrest, according to HuMENA. Yitzchak Horowitz, a journalist with the ultra-Orthodox Israeli magazine, BeKehila, reported late last month that he had been arrested in Kuwait on suspicion of espionage after taking photos of US warships off the Gulf Coast. Horowitz said he was questioned for several hours before being released.

Former adviser to the UK’s Middle East peace envoy, Ashish Prashar, told Zeteo that arbitrarily imprisoning journalists under the guise of national security is a “grave misstep.”

“Journalism is fundamentally about telling the truth; it is essential work, an act of service, and one the public needs in order to make informed decisions,” Prashar said. “The State Department and Foreign Office need to demand the release of all media workers from their allies in the Gulf. Anything less would be an abandonment of their ethical obligations and an endorsement of authoritarian practices.”

The State Department and the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington, DC, did not immediately return a request for comment.

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[Husband of missing American woman will remain in Bahamas after jail release, attorney says \(FOX News\), 9 Articles](#)

Peter D’Abrosca, FOX News

April 14, 2026, 9 Articles

The husband of a missing American woman who was held in a Bahamian jail for five days before his Monday night release will remain in the Bahamas, according to his attorney.

Brian Hooker was behind bars at the Central Police Station in Freeport from Wednesday to Monday evening as the Rohal Bahamian Police Force (RBPF), in conjunction with the U.S. Coast

Guard, investigated the disappearance of his wife off the coast of Elbow Cay in Great Abaco Island on Saturday, April 4.

"He wants to continue with the search for his wife, because that is his main focus," Terrel Butler told Fox News Digital. "So as long as he can remain in the Bahamas, you remain in the Bahamas."

She said that on Tuesday, Hooker will meet with Bahamian police in an attempt to recover electronics, including his phone and computer, that were confiscated during the investigation.

He maintained his innocence throughout the investigation, which is still ongoing, and his time in custody. Bahamian authorities have the option to arrest Hooker again if they see fit.

It is unclear whether Hooker is currently in possession of his passport.

Hooker walked out the front door of the Central Police Station, attorney in tow, at around 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday night. The pair bolted for a taxi, and Hooker stayed overnight at a local hotel.

Lynette Hooker was last seen the night of April 4 after the couple left the Abaco Inn on a dinghy headed back to their anchored yacht.

According to Brian, the wind gusts and choppy waters rocked their eight-foot dinghy as they left the harbor outside the restaurant and resort, and Lynette fell overboard. Subsequently, he said, he drifted and paddled about four miles before washing up on a rocky beach in Marsh Harbour, where he encountered a security guard at a boatyard who called police.

Hooker said he initially helped police with the search before he was taken into custody on Wednesday.

Bahamian law allows for a 48-hour detention in jail without charging someone with a crime. Under special circumstances, that detention can be extended, and in Hooker's case, it was. He spent 72 more hours behind bars after authorities decided not to release him on Friday night.

Family members, including his step-daughter, made claims of abuse against the 58-year-old, who is from Michigan but retired to his boat with his wife several years ago.

"I've seen him choke out one of his daughters before. And we had to go to court for that," Karli Aylesworth told Fox & Friends last week. "So he's just repeating patterns."

Hooker denied wrongdoing and has spoken publicly about the incident, saying in a Facebook post that he is "heartbroken."

"I am heartbroken over the recent boat accident in unpredictable seas and high winds that caused my beloved Lynette to fall from our small dinghy near Elbow Cay in the Bahamas," he

wrote. "Despite desperate attempts to reach her, the winds and currents drove us further apart. We continue to search for her and that is my sole focus."

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[Husband of missing American woman in the Bahamas says he'll keep searching for her following his release \(CNN\), 9 Articles](#)

Alisha Ebrahimji, CNN

April 14, 2026, 9 Articles

In some of his first interviews since being released from police custody in the Bahamas, Brian Hooker told CBS and NBC on Tuesday he is choosing to believe his wife is still alive and plans to go back out and search for her.

"No one has told me not to stop looking and I'm going to keep looking," he told NBC Tuesday.

Lynette Hooker, a 55-year-old mother and sailor, went missing on April 4. Her husband of 25 years told authorities she fell from an 8-foot dinghy in the rough waters near Elbow Cay in the Abaco Islands that evening as the couple was traveling back to their yacht, according to police.

The Michigan couple, both US nationals, have been sailing together for more than a decade, documenting their life at sea on social media. They were navigating the Bahamas on their yacht, Soulmate, when the incident happened.

The 10 days without his wife by his side is the longest Brian Hooker has ever been apart from her, he told NBC.

"I want people to know that Lynette is my life and we have been together almost half my life and we belong to each other and I mean to keep looking," Hooker told the outlet.

Brian Hooker was arrested and questioned several times by police in connection with his wife's disappearance before being released without charges Monday. The US Coast Guard has since opened a criminal investigation into Lynette Hooker's disappearance.

"I believe I've been told that people have lasted in the Bahamas after falling overboard for days and even weeks," he told CBS, adding with so many islands, the search area is vast and there are many possibilities for where she could have taken refuge. He said he is "not really capable of just turning away from this."

Before his arrest, Brian Hooker had planned to hire a plane to search for his wife by air, he told NBC.

It is unclear whether his plans have changed but his attorney, Terrel Butler, told CNN Tuesday Hooker's primary focus remains on the search for his wife and he is "dedicating his full emotional and physical energy toward coordinating with relevant parties to find her."

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[What's next for Brian Hooker after his release from custody? \(NewsNation\), 9 Articles](#)

Brian Entin, NewsNation

April 14, 2026, 9 Articles

Brian Hooker, the American man who was taken into custody in the Bahamas after his wife was reported missing, was recently released from police custody.

Hooker was detained by the Bahamian police on April 8, just three days after telling them that his wife, Lynette Hooker, reportedly fell overboard from a dinghy while they were on a boat ride on Saturday, April 4.

He said he threw a flotation device to her when she fell, but couldn't see her anymore due to strong winds and currents.

Although the Bahamian authorities released Hooker as they could not legally detain him any longer, they have made it clear that an investigation is still underway, and they don't have any evidence to charge him yet.

In a recent interview he gave, Hooker said he is focused on getting back out and looking for his wife.

"I won't be able to stop looking," Hooker told CBS News. "I'm gonna need somebody with more authority to tell me to stop."

Since Lynette's disappearance, friends and family members have spoken out, especially her daughter Karli Aylesworth, who alleged that Brian and Lynette often had a volatile relationship and that Brian was "violent" toward her. They said his account of events are "suspicious."

While police in the Bahamas are continuing their investigation, the U.S. Coast Guard is also investigating Lynette's disappearance.

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[Partner of US influencer who died in Zanzibar speaking to police as witness \(BBC\), 6 Articles](#)

Alfred Lasteck, Basillioh Rukanga, BBC

April 14, 2026, 6 Articles

The partner of US influencer Ashly Robinson, who died last week while on holiday with him on the Tanzanian islands of Zanzibar, has had his passport "withheld", the local police said in a statement.

Joe McCann, 45, is understood to be speaking to police as a witness. No arrests have been

made and the police had previously told local media that McCann was not suspected of wrongdoing.

Zanzibar's police had earlier told the BBC that Robinson, 31, known online as Ashlee Jenae, had attempted to take her own life. McCann has not made any public statement on the matter.

In a US interview, Robinson's parents said her death in Tanzania "doesn't make any sense" and were seeking answers.

"Investigations into the case are ongoing, including awaiting the official medical examination report from doctors," the police said.

Robinson had "been found unconscious in her villa and taken to hospital, where her death was confirmed hours later", her family said in a statement issued on Sunday.

In an interview with the BBC's US media partner CBS News, Robinson's parents described their daughter as "a light" and a "beautiful person" who was "supposed to be happy".

She had just celebrated her birthday and had got engaged during the trip, "and then she is just gone", her mother, Yolanda Endres, said.

"We are confused about how that could change so drastically."

The parents said they had heard from McCann 11 hours after the incident that supposedly led to Robinson's death and "not with a lot of detail". They were later told by Zuri Zanzibar, the hotel where the couple had been staying, that she had died.

Zanzibar's North Unguja police chief Benedict Mapujira told the BBC that the couple were reported to have had a misunderstanding, prompting Zuri Zanzibar's management to separate them into different rooms. But in a statement to the BBC, the hotel did not confirm details of the case given by the police.

Mapujira said the case was reported late last Wednesday at a nearby police station after hotel staff raised the alarm over a guest suspected to be suicidal.

"[Robinson] was then taken to hospital for treatment that night, but she passed away the following day (9 April)," he told the BBC.

In a statement, Zuri Zanzibar told the BBC that it was deeply saddened by the "tragic incident involving one of our guests".

It said it was co-operating with authorities and the US embassy, but declined to comment further citing privacy concerns and the need to protect the integrity of the investigations.

Offering its condolences, the state department in Washington confirmed the death of an

American in Zanzibar adding that the administration "has no higher priority than the safety and security of Americans".

Robinson's parents have said they are co-operating with authorities as investigations continue.

Days before her death, Robinson had posted photos and videos from her trip, including one taken at a zoo in Tanzania's northern region of Kilimanjaro.

On her Instagram page, followers have been sharing condolence messages.

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[Family seeks answers after influencer Ashlee Jenae is found dead on vacation in Tanzania \(GMA\), 6 Articles](#)

Deena Zaru, Victoria Beaulé, and Liezl Thom, GMA

April 14, 2026, 6 Articles

The family of 31-year-old Ashly Robinson is seeking answers after authorities in Zanzibar announced that the American social media influencer died by suicide at a hotel in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

"My daughter Ashly, she's no longer here with us, and we're trying to find out why," Robinson's mother, Yolanda Denise Endres, told ABC station in Philadelphia, WPVI.

"Uncertainty. Mystery. Anger. Sadness. It's like a part of me has been taken," her father Harry Robinson told WPVI.

Robinson, a lifestyle influencer who has more than 100,000 followers on Instagram, goes by the name Ashlee Jenae on social media, where she shared life updates, travel adventures and moments with her fiancée Joseph McCann, who was vacationing with her in the Zanzibar region of Tanzania at the time of her death.

Robinson's most recent Instagram posts included photos of her and McCann celebrating her 31st birthday on the safari trip in Tanzania. Her final post on Instagram was posted on April 5 and included a montage of photos showing Robinson feeding a giraffe, where she was surrounded by rose petals that spelled, "HBD Ashlee," and the caption, "Chapter 31 and I'm exactly where I need to be."

"She was starting the next chapter of her life. She called us to FaceTime us to share with us her travel and her vacation," Endres said.

Zanzibar deputy police commissioner Zuberi Chembela told ABC News Tuesday that McCann is still being questioned by police, and an investigation into her death is ongoing.

ABC News has reached out to McCann but requests for comments were not returned. It is

unclear if he has retained an attorney. No charges have been filed.

According to Zanzibar Police, Robinson and McCann checked into the Zuri Zanzibar hotel on April 6 and Robinson was found in her hotel room overnight from April 8 to April 9.

Endres told WPVI that her daughter called her on April 8 and said that she and McCann had an argument and they were moved to separate rooms by hotel staff.

Police told ABC News that hotel staff had been alerted to a domestic disturbance that was described as a "romantic conflict" between Robinson and her McCann during their stay by other hotel guests.

Hotel staff separated McCann and Robinson on the night of April 8, moving McCann to a different villa in the resort about 8-10 minutes walking distance from Robinson's room, police said, and Robinson was found unresponsive in her room "about two or three hours" later by hotel staff.

Endres said that McCann called her on April 9 and told her that her daughter was in the hospital.

"He told me that Ashly did something to herself and she was being taken to the hospital, and he told me she was stable," Endres said.

According to police, Robinson was "taken to a local hospital, and then transferred to another hospital before being declared dead on April 9."

"She's never done anything that would ever ever lead me to believe that she would do something to harm herself like that. She was happy," Endres said.

The results of a medical examination into Robinson's death are pending, police said, and McCann's passport has been confiscated amid the probe.

Robinson's parents told WPVI that they have reached out to Tanzanian and U.S. officials as they seek answers about their daughter's death.

"She was loved. She was not just going to be discarded and forgotten about," Endres said.

In a statement to ABC News, Zuri Zanzibar resort management said they were "deeply saddened by a tragic incident involving one of our guests," and that they were cooperating with local authorities and the U.S. Embassy.

A state department spokesperson confirmed to ABC News the recent death of an American in Zanzibar and said, "we offer our sincerest condolences to the family and loved ones on their loss," but that "due to privacy and other considerations, we have no further comment."

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[US internet 'troll' Johnny Somali sentenced to South Korea labor prison for public nuisance — months after comparing himself to Otto Warmbier \(New York Post\), 2 Articles](#)

Nicholas McEntyre, New York Post

April 15, 2026, 2 Articles

A controversial American YouTuber was sentenced to half a year in a South Korean labor prison for his nuisance behavior, including posting a video of himself crudely dancing on a statue honoring World War II sex slaves.

Ramsey Khalid Ismael, a self-proclaimed internet “troll” known as Johnny Somali online, was tossed into the specialized prison on Wednesday, the Korea Herald reported.

Ismael, 25, had provoked citizens in South Korea by singing the North Korean national anthem, spilled noodles inside a convenience store, got into several heated arguments with strangers, and degraded the solemn “Statue of Peace,” all stunts he shared on YouTube.

“I am the Otto Warmbier of South Korea. A political prisoner wrongfully and falsely accused and made into a scapegoat by a tyrannical government. The truth will come to light soon,” Ismael wrote on X in January, referencing college student Otto Warmbier, who became a North Korean prisoner in 2016 before he was released in a vegetative state and later died.

Ismael was indicted by the Seoul Western District Court in November on charges of obstruction of business and violations of minor public order laws.

“The defendant repeatedly committed crimes against unspecified members of the public to generate profit via YouTube and distributed the content in disregard of Korean law,” the court said during the trial, noting prosecutors sought a three-year prison sentence, according to the outlet.

The trial, originally scheduled for March 2025, had been delayed after prosecutors added additional charges alleging Ismael shared AI-generated sexual content of him with a deepfake with a female YouTuber, the outlet reported.

Ismael was deemed a flight risk and was detained immediately after his sentencing.

Ismael faces 20 days of detention, is barred from working at institutions that serve minors and people with disabilities for five years, and will have to be registered as a sex offender for the same time.

Ismael, who currently boasts a whopping 5,220 YouTube subscribers, had become notorious on the South Korean streets for his offensive stunts, including repeatedly shouting racial slurs.

After his indictment, Ismael reshared videos on his YouTube account of what he claimed was the reason for his charges.

In a video posted in January titled “They Want me in Korean Jail for this...” Ismael recorded himself in a black robe and hood similar to that of a Ku Klux Klan member and inciting several heated arguments.

In one encounter, a man yelled at Ismael to “get out of this country” as the online agitator continued to provoke the situation.

Ismael continued his romp around the Korean capital getting into several more heated arguments and making sexually abusive and racist comments at unsuspecting passers-by.

One interaction occurred inside a convenience store when Ismael and another man got into a shouting match over Israel before the two were kicked out by a store employee, but not before the streamer shouted “Free Palestine.”

A second video posted in March titled “I’m Facing Charges for Dancing in Korea (with TTS),” Ismael and another man deliberately caused a scene on a Korean bus, twerking in the aisles to music blasting out of his phone speakers while his viewers’ comments were read aloud by text-to-speech (TTS).

Ismael was confronted by a couple sitting on the bus and he began spewing “facts” about the history of North and South Korea while ignoring a woman when she brought up proper manners for passengers.

Police were called onto the bus and kicked out the two hooligans.

Ismael walked the rest of the way to his destination, the “Statue of Peace” or “Comfort Women Statue.”

The memorial was created as a symbol for the approximately 200,000 women forced into sexual slavery by Japanese soldiers during World War II, according to the BBC.

Ismael approached the statue – featuring a young girl sitting in a straight posture on a chair with her hands on her lap – before he made sexual dance moves on top of and in front of the memorial.

The streamer at one point even kissed the statue of the girl, putting his beanie on her head, showing his bleached hair.

In his bio on X, Ismael calls himself a “Political Prisoner in South Korea on Trial for Freedom of Speech and Expression.”

He has made similar comments towards the judicial system in Japan after he was fined \$1,257

for disturbing the peace with his loud music while at a restaurant in Japan, the BBC reported.

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[Trump-Voting Pilot Detained Overseas Turns on 'Useless' Administration \(Daily Beast\), 2 Articles](#)

Janna Brancolini, Daily Beast

April 14, 2026, 2 Articles

A pilot who voted for President Donald Trump and has been detained for months in West Africa has blasted the administration for being “useless” in helping him get home.

U.S. citizens Brad Schlenker, 63, and Fabio Nunez, 33, were flying a family of five to Dubai in December when they stopped to refuel in Guinea.

When they landed, they were met on the tarmac not by a refueling truck, but by dozens of armed Guinean military personnel, who arrested them and held them for three months in a military prison, according to multiple news reports.

Last month, the pilots were released on bail, but they’ve been ordered to remain in Guinea’s capital of Conakry while they await trial on charges of unauthorized landing and breaching national security, Semafor reported.

In the meantime, the Trump administration has been taking a low-key approach to freeing the men that has turned out to be “useless,” Schlenker, who has a wife and kids, told Semafor.

“I voted for this administration because they were supposed to protect Americans,” he said.

State Department officials have been engaging behind the scenes with officials in Conakry, but the administration has said very little publicly about the case.

U.S. officials regularly visited Schlenker and Nunez in prison, and Washington “remains engaged on this case,” a State Department spokesperson told Semafor.

“The Trump administration has no higher priority than the safety and security of Americans,” the spokesperson said.

The White House also said in a statement that Trump is “always concerned about Americans detained abroad.”

The Daily Beast has also reached out for comment.

But Schlenker said that people close to the situation have told him that if Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, or another high-profile administration official “just picked up the phone, we’d be out of here.”

He and Nunez, who are freelance pilots, say they have radio transcripts that confirm they received clearance to land.

In February, Schlenker appealed to Rubio and Trump to help him, to no avail, WGN9 Chicago reported.

Schlenker told Semafor he thinks Guinea's extensive mineral resources, including some of the world's largest deposits of bauxite and iron ore, are "weighing in on this situation."

The Trump administration is courting Conakry as part of a wider push for secure access to African minerals.

Guinea, meanwhile, has been trying to navigate a "middle path" as Washington, Beijing, Paris, and Moscow all vie for commercial influence in the region.

Sources told Semafor that officials in Conakry were likely trying to avoid the possibility of anti-Western nationalists seizing on the pilots' case as a violation of Guinean sovereignty, thereby sparking a domestic scandal.

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Passports and Citizenship

[BBB warns Alabama residents about rising passport renewal scams \(FOX54\), 1 Article](#)

Austin Pylant, FOX54

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

Passport renewal scams are increasing across Alabama and nationwide, according to data from BBB Scam Tracker, prompting warnings from BBB North Alabama.

Between Jan. 1 and April 13, 2026, nine passport renewal scam reports were filed in Alabama. That compares to 15 reports for all of 2025.

Nationally, the trend is also rising. In 2025, more than 1,450 passport-related scam reports were submitted, and 738 have already been reported in just the first quarter of 2026, suggesting the scam remains active and steady.

Officials say one of the most commonly reported websites is USPassportandVisa.org. The site claims to assist with international travel services, but despite a disclaimer stating it is not affiliated with any government agency, many consumers report believing they are using an official government site.

Scams often begin when travelers search online for passport renewal information and click on fraudulent websites designed to closely resemble official government pages. Victims may be charged unnecessary fees and asked to enter personal information before realizing they still

must complete the process through the U.S. Department of State, leading to delays and additional costs.

BBB offers the following tips to help consumers avoid passport renewal scams:

Do thorough research. Always verify passport renewal procedures through official U.S. government channels. Accessing accurate information can help you avoid unnecessary fees and third-party interference. The official site to start the passport renewal process and access the free forms needed is travel.state.gov

Allow ample processing time. Passport processing times can vary. Planning ahead and checking current timelines through the U.S. Department of State can reduce the temptation to use risky “expedited” services.

Verify website URLs. Official government websites end in .gov. Be cautious of sponsored ads or lookalike URLs designed to appear legitimate. Always confirm the site is secure before entering personal information.

Be cautious with third-party services. Use BBB.org and BBB Scam Tracker to research companies before sharing sensitive information. Many third-party sites are not scams, but some are designed to mislead consumers.

Report scams. If you encounter or fall victim to a scam, report it to BBB Scam Tracker. Your report can help protect others and support ongoing tracking efforts.

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[USPS Passport Kick-Off \(USPS\), 1 Article](#)

Staff, USPS

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

Do you need a passport, but you can't make it to the Post Office during weekday business hours? Then get ready to strike a pose, capture the perfect passport photo at the Alexandria USPS Passport Kick-Off—and celebrate checking this off your to-do list!. Skip the weekday scramble and join us for a stress-free celebration of getting your travel docs in order.

The Alexandria Main Post Office at 1715 Odom Street, Alexandria, LA 71301 will host a Passport Fair, Saturday, April 18 from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

To save time, customers may visit www.usps.com/passport or click QR code (right) to learn about the application process and download and complete an application form (except for signature) before coming to the Passport Fair.

Photos available onsite: \$15

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[Maryland-Tied \\$91M Fraud Mastermind Faces Loss Of US Citizenship After Sentence Was Cut Short \(Daily Voice\), 1 Article](#)

Zak Failla, Daily Voice

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

Federal officials have filed a case in Baltimore seeking to strip Emmanuel Oluwatosin Kazeem of his US citizenship, arguing he never should have been granted it in the first place.

Kazeem, a Nigerian national, was convicted in 2017 on 19 counts tied to a massive identity theft and tax fraud scheme that spanned multiple states, including Maryland.

Prosecutors say the operation was enormous.

Investigators linked him to more than 10,000 fraudulent federal tax returns, attempting to collect over \$91 million and successfully securing more than \$11.6 million.

The scheme relied on stolen identities — more than 259,000 of them — along with thousands of IRS filing PINs used to bypass federal safeguards.

Maryland played a key role in the case.

Search warrants executed in the state uncovered cash, electronic devices, money orders, and prepaid debit cards loaded with fraudulent refunds, according to federal investigators.

Authorities also say Kazeem used the proceeds to buy property in Maryland, including a newly constructed home and a townhouse.

He was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2018.

But in 2024, his sentence was commuted after he served just six years.

Now, federal officials say that doesn't settle the matter.

The Justice Department argues Kazeem carried out parts of the fraud both before and after becoming a US citizen and concealed key details during the process — including allegations of a sham marriage used to obtain legal status.

“US citizenship is a privilege, and we will continue to ask courts to revoke a status that was obtained through fraud and deceit,” Assistant Attorney General Brett Shumate said.

If the court agrees, Kazeem could lose his US citizenship entirely.

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Visas and Immigration

[U.S. Terminates Legal Status of Those Tied to Iranian Regime \(Editorials on Voice of America\), 1 Article](#)

Staff, Editorials on Voice of America

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

“The Trump administration,” declared Secretary of State Marco Rubio, “will never allow America to become a home for foreign nationals tied to anti-American terrorist regimes.”

Three additional Iranian nationals living in the U.S. with ties to the Iranian regime were arrested by federal agents following Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s termination of their lawful permanent resident (LPR) statuses.

Seyed Eissa Hashemi, Maryam Tahmasebi, and their son are now in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement pending their removal from the United States.

Eissa Hashemi is the son of Masoumeh Ebtekar, also known as “Screaming Mary,” the infamous spokeswoman for the Islamist militants who stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979 and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

Ebtekar was notorious for her role as the leading propagandist for the violent Islamists who perpetrated the Iran hostage crisis. As the lead spokesperson for the hostage-takers, Ebtekar, said the State Department in a statement, “crafted propaganda falsely showing the humane treatment of the hostages, arranging staged interviews in which the American hostages were pressured to describe their treatment in positive terms – even as they were being held in solitary confinement, blindfolded and starved, and subjected to physical and psychological terror, including beatings and mock executions.”

Ebtekar married one of her fellow hostage-takers and went on to rise to senior roles in Iran’s revolutionary regime, serving as a vice president as recently as 2017-2021.

Hashemi, Tahmasebi, and their son entered the United States in 2014 on visas issued under President Barack Obama’s administration. In June 2016 – just months after the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps seized two U.S. Navy vessels and captured 10 American sailors – the Obama Administration granted all three Iranian nationals lawful permanent resident (LPR) status via the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program. The issuance of new diversity visas has been suspended under President Donald Trump.

This “family should never have been allowed to benefit from the extraordinary privilege of living in our country,” said Secretary of State Marco Rubio in a post on social media.

Earlier in the month, Secretary Rubio terminated the legal status of the niece and grandniece of deceased Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Major General Qasem Soleimani. Hamideh Afshar Soleimani and her daughter are now in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Secretary Rubio also terminated the legal status of Fatemeh Ardeshir-Larijani, daughter of former Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran Ali Larijani, and her husband Seyed Kalantar Motamedi. Both Ardeshir-Larijani and Motamedi are no longer in the United States and are barred from future entry.

“The Trump administration,” declared Secretary of State Marco Rubio, “will never allow America to become a home for foreign nationals tied to anti-American terrorist regimes.”

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[State Department provides update on visa restrictions for religious freedom violators \(EWTN News\), 1 Article](#)

Madalaine Elhabbal, EWTN News

April 13, 2026, 1 Article

The U.S. State Department confirmed active enforcement of visa restrictions for individuals responsible for religious persecution abroad.

Mark Walker, U.S. principal adviser for global religious freedom, said the U.S. is following through on its commitment to restrict visas for perpetrators of religious persecution abroad.

In December 2025, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced restriction of U.S. visas under the Immigration and Nationality Act for “those who have directed, authorized, funded, significantly supported, or carried out violations of religious freedom,” Walker said in an April 10 post. “We have already executed on this policy and we will continue to subject perpetrators to additional scrutiny.”

“If you engage in persecution, you are not welcome in America. The United States is safer when we keep those responsible for religious persecution from entering our homeland,” he said.

Rubio said in a Dec. 3, 2025, statement: “The United States is taking decisive action in response to the mass killings and violence against Christians by radical Islamic terrorists, Fulani ethnic militias, and other violent actors in Nigeria and beyond.”

Rubio said the policy would hold accountable “individuals who have directed, authorized, significantly supported, participated in, or carried out violations of religious freedom and, where appropriate, their immediate family members.”

The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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[Trump Gold Card Visa Program Faces New Lawsuit \(Newsweek\), 3 Articles](#)

Dan Gooding and Gabe Whisnant, Newsweek

April 13, 2026, 3 Articles

A government watchdog group filed a lawsuit Monday challenging the Trump administration's refusal to release documents related to its Gold Card visa program, which allows foreign nationals to obtain U.S. residency in exchange for a \$1 million payment.

In a complaint filed in the U.S. District of Columbia, Democracy Defenders Fund said that legal permanent residency in the U.S. should not be reserved for the rich and accused the Trump administration of sending mixed messages about the gold card.

"Immigrant visas are not million-dollar Mar-a-Lago memberships," Kevin Bell, co-founder and partner at Free Information Group, said in a press release. "For months President Trump and Secretary Lutnick shifted their story about which foreign interests would benefit and who would suffer the cost. This litigation will reveal the true story. People may lie, but records don't."

The suit, filed alongside law firms Colombo & Hurd and Free Information Group, is against the Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security (DHS) and State, as well as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Newsweek reached out to DHS, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of State for comment via email Monday afternoon.

While the lawsuit does not seek to scrap the gold card, it does call for greater transparency from the Trump administration on its creation. The government has also faced multiple lawsuits around its immigration policies over the past year, including challenges to changes to the H-1B work-based visa and the ending of legal status for immigrants covered by Temporary Protected Status.

What Does the Lawsuit Say?

The filing alleges the agencies failed to comply with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests seeking records on how the program was developed and implemented.

According to the groups, the Gold Card program allows affluent applicants to bypass traditional employment- and merit-based visa pathways, potentially displacing other qualified candidates. The plaintiffs said they submitted FOIA requests earlier this year but did not receive the records they sought.

In court filings, the organizations argue that the public has a right to understand how the program operates and whether it affects existing immigration systems. They are asking a federal judge to order the agencies to produce the requested documents.

“Residency in the United States should not be reserved for the rich,” Sarah Wilson, partner and federal litigation practice leader at Colombo & Hurd, said in a press release. “The public deserves to know whether the government is pushing aside qualified applicants in favor of a program that puts wealth ahead of merit.”

Democracy Defenders Fund and Colombo & Hurd previously filed a separate legal challenge seeking to block the Gold Card program, arguing it unlawfully prioritizes wealth over merit. The administration has defended the initiative as a way to attract investment to the United States.

What Is the Gold Card?

Trump and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick announced the Gold Card in February 2025, as one of the first changes to the legal immigration system of his second term.

At the time, Trump and Lutnick said it would be a way to attract investors to the U.S., guaranteeing them green card status and a pathway to citizenship. The idea was to charge \$5 million for the visa, which would replace the long-standing EB-5 investor visa.

Details then remained sparse on the visa and how applications would work, although Lutnick made repeated statements in the following months that there had been dozens of applications, despite Congress not having formally created the visa, as is protocol.

In December, the program formally began, with a new website launching for applicants to file through and USCIS creating a new application form for the visa.

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[Florida Sen. Rick Scott Takes Aim At Foreign Student Work Permits, More Jobs For U.S. Grads \(Tampa Free Press\), 1 Article](#)

Mike Jenkins, Tampa Free Press

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

Senator Rick Scott is pushing for a major overhaul of how foreign graduates land jobs in the United States, sending a formal letter to President Trump last week to praise a crackdown on the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program.

Scott argues the program, which currently allows over half a million student visa holders to work in the U.S. after graduation, is an unauthorized shortcut that squeezes out American job seekers and opens the door to international espionage.

The Florida Senator highlighted a shift in the labor market, noting that since 2020, young American graduates are facing higher unemployment rates than the general public.

He specifically pointed to the tech sector, where the jobless rate for recent computer engineering graduates is nearly double the national average. “Young American graduates are

struggling to find jobs,” Scott wrote, asserting that the OPT program creates unfair competition for entry-level positions.

A significant portion of Scott’s concern focuses on national security, particularly regarding the 33,000 Chinese nationals currently holding STEM-specific OPT permits.

Citing warnings from the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, Scott claimed the program is being used by “government actors” for espionage and the theft of intellectual property. He noted that many recipients work in sensitive roles within universities and major tech firms, gaining access to innovative technology.

Legally, Scott argues the program stands on shaky ground. He described it as a “purely regulatory creation” with no basis in federal law, claiming the Immigration and Nationality Act intended student visas to be used “solely” for education.

According to Scott, the program was originally designed to bypass the annual caps Congress set for H-1B employment visas.

“The OPT program should not exist,” Scott stated in his letter. He expressed support for recent reports and Department of Homeland Security announcements suggesting the administration plans to amend or restrict the program. Scott told the President, “I am writing to commend your decisive actions to protect American jobs,” adding that he is eager to see the formal rule changes intended to prevent foreign nationals from displacing U.S. workers.

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[Passport Requirement Added as Diversity Visa 2027 Registration Delayed \(NepYork\), 1 Article](#)

Kishor Panthi, NepYork

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

The U.S. Diversity Visa (DV) 2027 registration period has been delayed by more than six months, but when it opens, applicants will face a major new requirement: providing valid passport details during registration.

The U.S. Department of State implemented the rule on April 10, aiming to reduce fraudulent entries and ensure only genuine applications are submitted for the lottery-style program known as the green card lottery.

Under the final rule, published as Public Notice 12948 in the Federal Register, participants must provide information from a valid, unexpired passport—including the serial number, name, country of issuance and expiration date—and upload a JPEG scan of the biographic and signature pages with their electronic entry form (DS-5501). The regulation amends 22 CFR Part 42 and applies beginning with the DV-2027 program year.

Limited exemptions apply for stateless individuals, certain nationals of Communist-controlled

countries unable to obtain passports, and those granted waivers on a case-by-case basis.

The U.S. Department of State said the updated requirement will help curb widespread fraud. During the DV-2025 cycle alone, the Department identified more than 2.5 million duplicate or fraudulent entries, often generated by third-party operations in countries such as Bangladesh, Ukraine, and Cambodia. In previous instances, criminal networks submitted entries without applicants' consent and later demanded large sums of money—or even sham marriages—from those selected.

Requiring verified passport details and scans during registration makes unauthorized submissions far more difficult, according to the State Department. The measure also allows earlier identity checks, improved national security vetting and better verification of country eligibility under the Immigration and Nationality Act's section 203(c).

A similar passport rule was active for DV-2021 through DV-2023, when officials recorded far fewer duplicate entries than in years without the requirement.

The rule also includes several technical updates: changing "gender" to "sex" to align with Executive Order 14168, replacing "age" with "date of birth" for accuracy, and standardizing language with "shall" to clarify instruction for consular officers.

Separately, a new \$1 entry fee has been finalized to help cover program costs and deter frivolous submissions.

The Department received 399 public comments on the proposed rule, published Aug. 5, 2025. A majority supported the passport requirement, citing benefits such as reduced identity theft and higher program integrity. Some opposed it, voicing concern about accessibility in low-income or conflict-affected regions, privacy risks from passport scans and potential legal vulnerability—referencing a 2019 court ruling that overturned a similar interim rule.

In its responses, the Department said exemptions will account for hardship cases and emphasized that selectees must present valid passports anyway when applying for visas under INA 222(b). Officials also adjusted the estimated time burden for completing the DV entry form to 90 minutes to include scanning and uploading tasks.

Historical data show entries fluctuate under the passport rule—ranging between 6.7 million and 9.6 million compared with roughly 23 million in DV-2024—but the State Department expects all 55,000 annual diversity visas to be fully utilized.

The regulation does not change basic eligibility requirements, which still call for applicants to be natives of qualifying low-admission countries and to meet minimum education or work experience criteria. Entrants must submit photos meeting detailed specifications and pay the \$1 fee when registration opens. The Department said updated application instructions will be issued ahead of the DV-2027 cycle.

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International Travel Advice

[US issues urgent travel notice for popular European destination \(MassLive.com\), 1 Article](#)

Dallas Gagnon, MassLive.com

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

The U.S. Embassy in Tirana has issued an urgent travel notice for Americans planning to visit Albania, citing potentially dangerous pro-Iran groups in the popular European travel destination.

According to an April 1 security alert, which is still ongoing, American travelers should “exercise increased vigilance” amid growing safety and security threats.

The alert warned that groups associated with Iran may seek to target entities associated with the U.S. or Iranian opposition elements in the country, as well as common tourist venues like shopping malls, hotels, clubs and restaurants.

Despite the formal warning, Albanian officials maintain there is no concrete evidence of a real security threat for visitors.

Law enforcement agencies, including anti-terrorism and criminal police, communicated with the American embassy’s security office and found no actionable intelligence pointing to a dangerous situation.

“The fact is that Albania remains a safe country for Albanian citizens and for all those who visit Albania,” Minister of Internal Affairs Besfort Lamallari said in Albanian in an April 2 press release.

The embassy’s warning comes as the country experiences a massive boom in tourism. The total number of foreign tourists who visited Albania in 2025 rose to 12.47 million from 11.7 million, as reported by Albanian Daily News.

Albania remains under a Level 2 travel advisory from the State Department, urging travelers to exercise increased caution due to crime concerns. That advisory was last updated on Dec. 31, 2024.

The U.S. Embassy recommends that American visitors stay alert, monitor local media for updates, be aware of their surroundings, review their personal security plans and keep their cell phones charged in case of an emergency.

Americans who need assistance in Tirana can contact the embassy at 355-0-4224-7285 or the State Department’s Consular Affairs at 888-407-4747 or 202-501-4444.

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[US updates Level 3 'reconsider travel' warning for Caribbean nation \(MLive.com\), 3 Articles](#)

Matt Durr, MLive.com

April 14, 2026, 3 Articles

The State Department updated the Level 3 travel advisory for the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago. On Monday, the warning removed the “kidnapping” indicator from the advisory, while adding an additional area of “increased risk.”

A Level 3 advisory is the second most serious on the department’s four-tier scale. A Level 3 warning means Americans should reconsider traveling to that country.

While the kidnapping threat was removed, U.S. officials warn that the threat of crime are still very high in Trinidad and Tobago. The advisory says that while crime has dropped in the country since 2024, there is still a threat. The warning indicates crime rates are lower in Tobago than in Trinidad.

U.S. government employees working in Trinidad and Tobago are not allowed to travel to the following areas in Port of Spain:

At any time: Laventille; The southern end of Charlotte Street between Oxford Street and Park Street (past the General Hospital); Piccadilly Street; Besson Street; Beetham, Sea Lots, Cocorite, and the interior of Queens’ Park Savannah.

At night: Port of Spain Beaches; Downtown Port of Spain; Fort George; Queens’ Park Savannah.

The advisory also warns Americans of an ongoing state of emergency in Trinidad and Tobago. Under the terms of the SOE, the government has imposed the following measures:

Police may arrest people on suspicion of involvement in illegal activities.

Police may also search and enter public and private properties as needed.

Bail is suspended for those suspected of committing a crime.

Members of the Defense Force are following similar regulations as the local police.

There are currently no curfews or restrictions on public gatherings.

Those who still plan to visit Trinidad and Tobago are reminded that health services in rural areas are limited. For more information on the advisory and other considerations if planning to visit Trinidad and Tobago, visit the State Department website.

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Miscellaneous

[US lifts shelter advisory in UAE after halt in drone and missile attacks \(Gulf News\), 2 Articles](#)

Nathaniel Lacsina, Gulf News

April 15, 2026, 2 Articles

The United States Embassy in the UAE has lifted its 'shelter-in-place' advisory for its employees following the cessation of recent missile and drone attacks.

In an update, the embassy said staff may resume normal movement but advised that they should be ready to seek immediate shelter indoors if any new aerial threat emerges. The same precaution applies to all US citizens in the country.

Despite the easing of restrictions, the US continues to maintain its travel advisory for the UAE at Level 3, urging citizens to reconsider travel.

The embassy and consulate remain on ordered departure status, with non-emergency personnel relocated outside the UAE. As a result, consular services are currently limited, and routine US visa services remain suspended.

US citizens requiring assistance, including passport services, have been advised to contact the embassy through its online US Citizen Services Navigator.

Actions to take:

Carefully review US issued Travel Advisory for the UAE

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security updates from the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General.

If an aerial attack occurs, stay away from glass doors, windows, and any fallen debris, and monitor your phone and news outlets for official guidance.

Keep a supply of food, water, medications, and other essential items in case it is necessary to shelter for a prolonged period.

Keep family and friends informed of your whereabouts and well-being.

Have travel documents up to date and easily accessible, and contact us if your U.S. passport is lost or will soon expire.

Keep a low profile and be aware of your surroundings.

Pay close attention to communications from local officials.

Keep your cell phone charged and pre-programmed with the emergency numbers listed below.

Assistance:

Dial 999 for emergency services in UAE.

Contact the Embassy in Abu Dhabi or the Consulate General in Dubai by visiting <https://ae.usembassy.gov/services/>, scrolling down to the “U.S. Citizen Services Navigator,” and clicking on your preferred location.

S. State Department Consular Affairs Call Center: 1-888-407-4747 (in United States or Canada) or 202-501-4444 (worldwide).

S. Embassy Abu Dhabi emergency number: +971-2-414-2200

S. Consulate General Dubai emergency number: +971-4-309-4000

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[South Africa Confirms it Won't Attend the G20 in Washington \(Bloomberg\), 1 Article](#)

Matthew Hill, Bloomberg

April 12, 2026, 1 Article

South African Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana has not been accredited to attend the upcoming meeting of the Group of 20 finance chiefs in Washington, deepening a rift with the US.

Speaking to Bloomberg on Sunday at Amsterdam's Schipol airport, as he traveled to the US to take part in Spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, he said that both himself and South African Reserve Bank Governor Lesetja Kganyago will not be attending the G20.

“We are members of the G20,” he said. “However, the USA has not accredited us, which means that South Africa will not be part of the G20 for the whole of this year.”

US President Donald Trump, who has falsely claimed that South Africa was committing genocide against White Afrikaans people and seizing land without compensation, said in November that the country would not be invited to the G20 summit he will host later this year in Miami.

The US took over the annual rotating presidency of the G20 from South Africa in late 2024 and it will next pass to the UK. The G20 traditionally meets on the sidelines of the bi-annual IMF and

World Bank gatherings and on other occasions, as well as holding a heads-of-state summit.

“We’ve taken a view that for us it is a holiday from the G20 this year,” Godongwana said. “We’re beginning in November with the UK presidency.”

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[Two Americans plead not guilty to 2023 murder of Canadian couple in Dominica \(Caribbean National Weekly\), 3 Articles](#)

Jovani Davis, Caribbean National Weekly
April 14, 2026, 3 Articles

Two United States nationals charged in connection with the 2023 killing of Canadian animation pioneer Daniel Langlois and his partner Dominique Marchand pleaded not guilty when they appeared in court on Tuesday in Dominica.

Jonathan Lehrer, 57, and 62-year-old Robert Snider Jr. entered their pleas before High Court Judge Sejilla McDowall.

During the hearing, defense counsel Tiyanía Behanzin unsuccessfully attempted to prevent the indictment from being read to the accused. The defense argued that documents alleging “abuse of process” had already been filed on behalf of the men and that it would be improper to proceed with reading the charges.

However, the prosecution, led by Director of Public Prosecutions Sherma Dalrymple, objected, telling the court that the indictment had been properly filed and that there was no reason to delay reading the charges so the accused could enter their pleas.

Judge McDowall agreed with the prosecution and ruled that the indictment should be read and that the defendants be required to plead guilty or not guilty. The court, however, granted the defense time to properly file and serve its “abuse of process” application, which the prosecution will then be required to respond to.

Prosecutors allege that between November 29 and December 2, 2023, the two Americans murdered Langlois and Marchand. The couple’s bodies were later found in a burned vehicle near Gallion, Dominica, close to where they owned a resort. The pair had been reported missing for several days before the discovery.

The killings reportedly followed a long-standing dispute over access to a public road. Lehrer owned the 53-acre Bois Cotlette Inc. Estate adjacent to the couple’s eco-luxury resort, Coulibri Ridge.

The matter has been adjourned to May 1, 2026.

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[US families contest Italian law restricting citizenship by descent in highest court \(AP\), 1 Article](#)

Colleen Barry and Silvia Stellacci, AP

April 14, 2026, 1 Article

Two U.S. families went to Italy's highest court Tuesday to challenge the scope of a year-old law passed by Giorgia Meloni's government limiting citizenship claims to Italian descendants removed by more than two generations.

Their lawyer, Marco Mellone, argued before the Cassation Court that the law should apply only to people born after it took effect, potentially opening a pathway to citizenship for millions of people living in the United States and parts of Latin America. Another lawyer represented Italian descendants from Venezuela.

A decision by an expanded panel, which makes the ruling binding in lower courts, is expected in the coming weeks.

A decree by the conservative government in March 2025 put the brakes on previous rules allowing anyone who could prove ancestry after Italy's formation in 1861 to seek citizenship. Italy's constitutional court last month ruled the new law is valid, but Mellone said the supreme court has the power to clarify the scope of the law.

"The families involved in this case are simply descendants ... from an Italian ancestor who emigrated in the late 19th century to the United States, like millions of other people, of other Italians," Mellone said before the hearing. "Today they are invoking their right to Italian citizenship."

Mellone's case would clarify the citizenship rights of the descendants of some 14 million Italians who emigrated between 1877 and 1914, according to Foreign Ministry statistics, and beyond.

While Mellone's case involves two families, another dozen people whose citizenship claims were stopped by the law were present outside the courthouse in solidarity.

Karen Bonadio said she hopes one day to move to Italy on the strength of her ancestry. She brought photos of her as a young girl alongside her Italian-born great-grandparents, who emigrated from Basilicata in southern Italy to upstate New York, along with their birth certificates.

"The new law says, 'all these great-grandchildren didn't know their great-grandparents.' This is from 1963, I think I was 3 ½," she said, showing the photograph.

At least one of Mellone's cases had been rejected in lower courts before the new law, hinging partially on rulings that Italian emigrants who took on another citizenship before having children cannot pass on Italian citizenship.

Jennifer Daly's case has been working its way through the Italian bureaucracy for nearly a

decade. Her grandfather, Giuseppe Dallfollo, immigrated to the U.S. in 1912 from the northern province of Trento when it was under Austro-Hungarian control. He later married an Italian woman and brought her over, and at some point became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Daly said she always had a strong Italian identity that transcended her last name anglicized by U.S. immigration officials. She petitioned for citizenship because “it is truly a recognition of who I am, where I am from. It’s so much more than citizenship. It’s everything,” Daly, a retired history professor, said by phone from Salina, Kansas.

Outside the courthouse, Alexis Traino said great-grandparents on both her maternal and paternal sides had come from Italy, where she now lives, mainly in Florence.

“My entire life, I grew up knowing — and my parents always emphasized — that I was Italian. I had a very, very strong connection with Italy,” said Traino, 34, who was waiting for documents from Italy and the U.S. when the law passed, blocking her case.

“I want to be Italian. I want to contribute to Italy and be a citizen,” she said.

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