



Somali referee refused entry to settler colonial US

Description

default watermark

somali referee omar artan

With just days to go before the start of the 2026 World Cup, [the settler colonial US have been denying entry](#) to fans, players, and officials — this time to Somali referee Omar Artan.

At a time when all eyes should be on the stadiums and the national teams, some of the World Cup's most prominent stories have begun at airports and border checkpoints.

Somali referee turned away

Somali referee Omar Abdulqadir Artan was set for a historic moment in his career after being selected by FIFA for the 2026 World Cup, making him one of the most prominent African referees at the tournament.

However, the journey came to an abrupt end [upon his arrival in the United States](#) where he underwent additional screening and questioning before US authorities refused him entry and sent him back to Istanbul, despite him holding a valid visa.

Artan had met all of FIFA's technical and administrative requirements for participation in the tournament, and of course has travelled widely in his role as a professional referee. Nevertheless, his dream of appearing at the world's biggest football event was dashed by procedures relating to entry into the host country.

The case quickly became one of the most sensitive issues ahead of the World Cup, given its implications that go beyond football and affect the ability of approved participants to reach the tournament.

Iraq captain Ayman Hussein: lengthy investigations and a different outcome

Days before the Artan case, [Reuters](#) highlighted another incident that sparked controversy within the World Cup, when Iraqi striker Ayman Hussein underwent an investigation lasting around seven hours at O'Hare Airport in Chicago following the arrival of his national team's delegation.

According to the agency, the procedures included a search of the player's phone before he was eventually allowed to enter and join the Iraqi national team's camp.

However, the outcome was not the same for the Iraqi national team's official photographer, Talal Salah, who was detained for more than ten hours and subjected to similar procedures, before being definitively denied entry to the United States.

The two incidents have once again raised questions about the nature of the procedures faced by some participants in the tournament, particularly as both cases involved individuals who had arrived as part of an officially accredited delegation to take part in the global event.

The World Cup under the microscope

Although the details of each case differ, the common thread is that the crisis did not relate to sporting competition or technical readiness, but rather to entry procedures into the United States.

In the space of a few days, a FIFA-accredited referee found himself excluded from the tournament, whilst the captain of the Iraqi national team spent hours under investigation, and an official photographer was barred from accompanying his national team – scenes that were unforeseen ahead of the biggest edition in World Cup history.

As the opening whistle approaches, it seems that the controversy over visas and border procedures has become part of the World Cup landscape, adding a new challenge for the tournament as it prepares to welcome the world to the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Featured image via [YouTube screenshot/Al Jazeera English](#)

By [Alaa Shamali](#)

[Source link](#)

CATEGORY

- News

POST TAG

- colonial

- 2. entry
- 3. news
- 4. referee
- 5. refused
- 6. settler
- 7. somali

Category

- 1. News

default watermark