



US denies visas to 15 members of Iran's 2026 World Cup delegation

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World Cup

Preparations for the [Iranian](#) national team's participation in the 2026 World Cup have escalated into a tense political issue, following a visa crisis that triggered a diplomatic spat between Tehran and Washington. Meanwhile, the team continues its technical training, focusing away from the administrative turmoil.

For a long time, there were doubts and continuous discussions about whether the Iranian national team would participate in or withdraw from the 2026 World Cup due to the US war against Iran since last February.

Visa crisis brings politics back to the World Cup

While the Iranian national team players and technical staff received US entry visas for the tournament, 15 members of the administrative and organizational staff remained without approval. This led the Iranian Football Federation to accuse Washington of "discrimination and political interference in sports."

In contrast, [The Athletic](#) quoted an American official confirming that the granted visas included only the "necessary" players and staff members, emphasizing that the US "will not allow the tournament to be used as cover to bring in individuals who pose a security threat."

The Iranian embassy in Turkey responded with an escalating tone, describing the incident as "deliberate and discriminatory treatment" against the national team's delegation. Concurrently, the Iranian Football Federation demanded that FIFA intervene and open a formal investigation into the matter.

The Iranian Federation called the situation “political interference in sports in its worst form,” affirming that it will pursue the matter with FIFA as the organizing body of the tournament.

15 officials banned from the US

According to [Tasnim News Agency](#), 15 members of the administrative delegation were denied visas, including prominent federation officials such as the Executive Director, Secretary-General, and Media Director.

While Iranian media sources confirmed that these individuals will head to Mexico to join the delegation, the national team continues to manage its logistical affairs away from the United States, as part of an alternative accommodation plan for the tournament.

Technically, the Iranian national team has been holding its training camp in Antalya, Turkey, since May 18. During this period, they played two friendly matches, winning against Gambia (3-1) and Mali (2-0), indicating a relative readiness ahead of the finals.

The team is scheduled to later head to Toluca, Mexico, which they have chosen as their main headquarters during the tournament, in an effort to minimize their presence on American soil amid the ongoing political controversy surrounding the issue.

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A tough group awaits Iran

The Iranian national team will compete in Group 7, facing New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles on June 15 and 21, respectively, before meeting the Egyptian national team in Seattle on June 26. This group appears to be among the most competitive in the tournament.

Featured image via Mohamed Farag/Getty Images

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