



By: TA | AP Brief

Caribbean islands reach deal with US government to accept asylum-seekers



The United States on Monday reached a deal with Dominica to start sending foreigners seeking U.S. asylum to the small Caribbean nation.

Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit described the deal as "one of the primary areas of collaboration" after the country was recently hit with partial U.S. visa restrictions.

Dominica's government has been in talks with U.S. officials to try to resolve the U.S. entry limitations.

Skerrit did not provide any other details, including how soon the U.S. would start sending asylum-seekers to Dominica.

Skerrit said that during discussions with the U.S. State Department, "there have been careful deliberations of the need to avoid receiving violent individuals or individuals who will compromise the security of Dominica."

Dominica has a population of roughly 72,000, and Monday's announcement has left many locals concerned about whether the island has enough resources to absorb asylum-seekers into its population, according to Thomson Fontaine, leader of the country's main opposition party.

"The prime minister still has not told the Dominican public what exactly he has agreed to, in terms of the numbers of persons that are going to come to Dominica, where will they be housed, how will they be taken care of," Fontaine told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Similar deals

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has signed similar deals with countries, including Belize and Paraguay, as it **continues to pressure** countries in Latin America and Africa to take asylum-seekers.

Antigua and Barbuda also announced Monday that it has signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding proposed by the U.S. "as part

of its global efforts to share responsibility for refugees already present in its territory."

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Last month, the Trump administration announced it was expanding **travel restrictions** to an additional 20 countries, including Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda, the sole Caribbean nations on that list. The restrictions took effect Jan. 1.