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Announcement of a Visa Restriction Policy Targeting Foreign Nationals Who Censor Americans

PRESS STATEMENT

MARCO RUBIO, SECRETARY OF STATE

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Free speech is among the most cherished rights we enjoy as Americans. This right, legally enshrined in our constitution, has set us apart as a beacon of freedom around the world. Even as we take action to reject censorship at home, we see troubling instances of foreign governments and foreign officials picking up the slack. In some instances, foreign officials have taken flagrant censorship actions against U.S. tech companies and U.S. citizens and residents when they have no authority to do so.

Today, I am announcing a new visa restriction policy that will apply to foreign nationals who are responsible for censorship of protected expression in the United States. It is unacceptable for foreign officials to issue or threaten arrest warrants on U.S. citizens or U.S. residents for social media posts on American platforms while physically present on U.S. soil. It is similarly unacceptable for foreign officials to demand that American tech platforms adopt global content moderation policies or engage in censorship activity that reaches beyond their authority and into the United States. We will not tolerate encroachments upon American sovereignty, especially when such encroachments undermine the exercise of our fundamental right to free speech.

This visa restriction policy is pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which authorizes the Secretary of State to render inadmissible any alien whose entry into the United States “would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States.” Certain family members may also be covered by these restrictions.