

Risky immigrants may have to register

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Body

WASHINGTON -- The Justice Department announced anti-terrorism changes Wednesday to require roughly 100,000 new visitors each year to provide fingerprints, photographs and details about their plans in the United States.

The government said it would keep secret most its new criteria for identifying risky immigrants.

The rules, expected to take effect this fall, also will affect fewer than 100,000 foreigners already in the United States. Those foreigners will be instructed to report to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for registration, fingerprints and photographs and to visit immigration offices every 12 months until they leave.

Attorney General John Ashcroft declined to disclose the criteria the government will use to identify which of the 35 million foreign visitors who enter each year might be deemed threatening.

He did say nearly all visitors from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan and Syria -- except some diplomats -- will face the new scrutiny.

Visitors from other countries, especially Muslim and Middle Eastern nations, could be identified as potential threats depending on other factors, such as age or gender and whether they remain in the United States longer than 30 days.

Some visitors will be told they were deemed potential threats before traveling to the United States, Justice officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

The new rules, called the "National Entry-Exit Registration System," will compare visitors' fingerprints with those of suspected terrorists.

"We will be able to stop terrorists from entering the country," Ashcroft said.

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