



'Blatant bigotry': Aid groups blast Trump's reworked travel ban

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International humanitarian groups have slammed US President Donald Trump's revised travel ban, which targets six Muslim-majority nations, for sharing many of the same flaws as its predecessor.

Similar to the January order, travel ban 2.0 again prevents citizens from Syria, Iran, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Sudan from entering the United States for at least 90 days. In this iteration, Iraq is not on the list of barred countries.

The new order, which the Trump administration says is needed to protect the United States from foreign terrorists entering the country, will also suspend the admission of refugees for 120 days and urges US officials to improve vetting procedures for a resettlement program already regarded to be rigorous.

Aid groups, including the International Rescue Committee, or IRC, and Amnesty International USA, quickly condemned the new directive, arguing the ban still does not make the United States any safer.

David Miliband, IRC president and CEO, said in a statement that the revised executive order on immigration "heartlessly targets the most vetted and most vulnerable population to enter the United States." He added that the new executive order could affect 60,000 people already screened for resettlement in America.

"The ban doesn't target those who are the greatest security risk, but those least able to advocate for themselves. Instead of making us safer, it serves as a gift for extremists who seek to undermine the United States," Miliband said.

He said that while the IRC supports reviews of security-vetting protocols, the travel ban has left already-vetted refugees stranded in crisis zones, and in many cases, separated from their families in the United States.

Miliband urged Trump's administration to swiftly review the "already-strong vetting process" and reinstate the "lifesaving resettlement program."

According to the CATO Institute, nobody -- including refugees -- from the seven countries in the initial ban has killed anyone in a terror attack on US soil in the last four decades.

'Same hate, new packaging'

Margaret Huang, executive director of Amnesty International USA, said the revised order "is the same hate and fear with new packaging."

Huang slammed the order's geography-based limits, saying it would once again bring uncertainty to thousands of families, and put "anti-Muslim hatred into policy."

"No amount of editing can make this executive order anything but what it is -- blatant bigotry. There are real threats to security, but this bigoted order will do nothing to make the country safer," Huang said in a statement.

"Continuing to close US borders (to) people attempting to flee violence -- whether from Syria or Honduras -- will only intensify human rights crises all over the world. It is inhumane, shortsighted and against all of our shared values. Congress must step in immediately to block this new order."

Administration officials have denied the ban -- which goes into effect on March 16 -- targets a specific religion.

"(The order is) not any way targeted as a Muslim ban. ... We want to make sure everyone understands that," an official told reporters.