



Trump Signs Order Introducing 'New Vetting Measures'

The president said the order is aimed at keeping "radical Islamic terrorists" out of the U.S.

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President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday that introduces "new vetting measures" that he says are intended to keep "radical Islamic terrorists" out of the country. Trump signed the order at the Pentagon, where he attended a ceremonial swearing-in for Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

The order bans the issuance of visas and other immigration benefits to "nationals of particular concern" for 90 days. The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence have been directed to conduct a review to determine information needed from any country to issue any visa, admission, or other benefit, which will require any government that does not provide such information to start doing so within 60 days. Authorities may also provide the president with a list of additional countries recommended for similar treatment.

According to media reports from recent days, the countries impacted are Muslim majority, such as Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The order also bans the resettlement of refugees for four months and indefinitely suspends the entry of Syrian refugees. The four month ban is in place until officials determine what steps can be taken to determine that those approved for refugee admission do not pose a threat to the security of the country. Once the refugee admission process resumes, claims will be prioritized on the basis of religious-based persecution, provided that the religion of the individual is a minority religion in his or her respective country.

Other parts of the order seek the development of a uniform screening standard and procedure for all immigration programs, suspension of the Visa interview waiver program and a review of non-immigrant visa reciprocity agreements.

An analysis published by the Cato Institute found that nationals from those seven countries "have killed zero Americans in terrorist attacks on U.S. soil between 1975 and the end of 2015."

The analysis noted that "six Iranians, six Sudanese, two Somalis, two Iraqis and one Yemini have been convicted of attempting or carrying out terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Zero Libyans or Syrians have been convicted of planning a terrorist attack on U.S. soil during that time period."

Many news outlets pointed out that Muslim majority countries where Trump has business ties were not included in the temporary ban. During his campaign, Trump called for a ban on Muslims and later shifted his position to say he was in favor of "extreme vetting" of immigrants from certain countries. The current vetting process for refugees can take two years or longer to complete.

Nationals from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE would still be allowed into the country. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers from 9/11 were Saudi nationals. Two of them were from the UAE, one from Egypt and another from Lebanon.

Even before Trump signed the order, people protested the potential move in New York. The "emergency rally" was organized by the the New York chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

International groups like IRC and Oxfam have condemned the president's order.

“America has the strongest, most successful resettlement program in the world,” IRC President and CEO David Miliband said in a statement. “Certified by successive administrations, the U.S. resettlement program makes it harder to get to the United States as a refugee than any other route. This is one of many reasons to deplore the hasty decision made today.”

Oxfam said it vehemently condemns President Trump's "harmful and discriminatory executive order."