

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

## Travel ban drawing fire despite the tweaks

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Green-card holders are safe. Iraqis banned by January's court-halted executive order are in the clear. Syrian refugees, formerly banned indefinitely, are now barred for four months, like every other refugee.

But President Trump's executive order "do-over," derided by critics as "Muslim Ban 2.0," is drawing fire despite the tweaks.

"Muslims still feel harassed, ridiculed, and persecuted in their traveling," said Jacob Bender, director of the Philadelphia chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

"Just recently, Muhammad Ali's [Philadelphia-born] son was detained" and questioned about his religion, Bender said. "Religious screening should remain out of bounds in a multireligious, multiethnic society such as ours."

Social worker Kameelah Rashad is the former Muslim chaplain at the University of Pennsylvania and is now its interfaith fellow for spirituality, wellness and social justice. Under the president's order signed Monday, she said, "everyone who is Muslim, or perceived to be Muslim, is falling under that cloud of suspicion."

Even the logic of the ban doesn't seem to make sense, she said, because Saudi Arabians made up the majority of the 9/11 attackers, "but we don't see Saudi Arabia on the list" of barred countries, whittled from seven to six.

Syrian-born Rim Al-Bezem, a physician in Bucks County, is active with the Syrian American Medical Society, a relief organization that sends doctors and supplies to aid displaced Syrians.

Trump says the order "is to protect us from terrorists," she said. "But ... there has been no Syrian refugee who ever committed any terrorist act on U.S. soil," an assertion backed up by a recent Cato Institute analysis.

Renate Alkurdi and her husband, Nizar, founded the Narenj Tree Foundation, a Norristown-based charity that recently sent its 50th shipping container of donated clothes to Syrian refugees in the Middle East. Upgrading Syrian refugees from indefinitely banned to just temporarily barred, she said, isn't enough.

"To see the president closing another door for people who are suffering beyond imagination, people who are turning to us for freedom," she said, "is very sad."

