



Report: Trump's Travel Ban Could Soon Get Even Bigger

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President **Donald Trump's** travel ban has been one of the most contentious policies he's enacted while in office, spurring widespread protests and a series of legal blocks before it was ultimately upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018. But despite the controversy it inspired, the Trump administration isn't backing down from the policy. In fact, they might be expanding it even further. CNN [reports](#) that the White House is reportedly mulling adding even more countries to the travel ban, which currently affects citizens from Libya, Iran, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, North Korea, and Venezuela.

Per CNN, the travel restrictions would specifically target countries “that are not compliant with electronic documents and information sharing,” and fewer than five countries are currently under consideration for inclusion. The administration's goal, one official told CNN, is to “bring governments into compliance by using the power of access to the United States.” The potential travel bans would not be imposed on all the affected countries' citizens, but would rather be specifically tailored to each country. It is not yet clear which new countries would be affected by the ban, nor is it yet known if the countries will be majority-Muslim nations, which would further the perception that the travel ban specifically discriminates against Muslims.

While the travel ban, which Trump first tried to enact just one week after taking office in 2017, was once one of the most high-profile policies of his presidency, drawing widespread condemnation as it wound through the federal court system, the policy has more recently faded from the headlines, becoming one in a long line of damaging and seemingly discriminatory policies undertaken by the current administration. But since it was officially green-lit by the Supreme Court, the travel ban has been having a widespread effect. The administration testified at a House hearing in September that more than 31,000 people have so far been denied entry to the U.S. because of the travel ban, and the administration had granted waivers to only approximately 10%—7,679—of the 72,000 people in Iran, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and Syria who have applied for visas. The result has been separated families; migrants being unable to come to the U.S. to receive [medical care](#); and [academics, scientists](#), and other skilled professionals blocked from bringing their talents to the U.S. The Cato Institute [reported](#) in January that as of January 1, the policy had kept out 3,742 spouses or fiancés of U.S. citizens and 5,542 adopted children of U.S. citizens. “The human toll of the Muslim Ban is astounding and

shameful,” **Farhana Khera**, President & Executive Director of Muslim Advocates, testified to the House in September.

During the September hearing, officials from the State and Homeland Security Departments offered little insight into the reasoning behind the program and the waiver process. The officials were unable to provide a public rationale for why certain countries had been included on the list while others had been excluded, like Saudi Arabia or Russia, and gave no clarity on why the current waiver process was still preventing individuals that clearly don't pose a national security risk, like a two-year-old separated from her mother or an 85-year-old grandmother, from entering the country. “It seemed to me that these bureaucrats could give no clarity on how [the waiver process] is supposed to work and why it isn't working,” Rep. **Judy Chu** told the *Washington Post* after the hearing. The House has introduced legislation that would dismantle the travel ban, which currently has nearly 200 co-sponsors, though the measure has little chance of passing the Republican-controlled Senate.

The potential decision to expand the travel ban doesn't necessarily come as a surprise, of course, given the president's continued defense of what's become one of his signature policies. Trump referenced the ban in his remarks Sunday on the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, saying, “Now, maybe [members of ISIS] can get here, but we've done very well with Homeland Security and the ban, which, by the way, is approved by the United States Supreme Court, as you know.” “We have a very effective ban, and it's very hard for people to come to our country,” Trump continued. And the president's hits on legal immigration just keep coming: On Sunday, a new rule targeting immigrants is expected to go into effect, which will deny visas to immigrants who don't have health insurance or can't prove they have funds to pay for medical care in the U.S. “President Trump has failed to build a physical wall along the U.S.-Mexico border to deter illegal immigrants,” **Steve Yale-Loehr**, an immigration scholar at Cornell Law School, told the *New York Times*, “but he has effectively built an invisible wall to keep out legal immigrants.”