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DHS reports 73% of convicted international terrorists are foreign-born

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Most people convicted of international terrorism charges in the U.S. are foreign-born, according to a report out Tuesday that President Trump asked to back his travel ban.

The Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department report notes that three out of every four people convicted of international terrorism-related charges in the U.S between Sept. 11, 2001 and Dec. 31, 2016 were foreign-born.

U.S. federal courts convicted at least 549 people with international terrorism-related charges between Sept. 11, 2001 and Dec. 31, 2016.

Seventy-three percent of them, or 402, were foreign-born, and 148 of those convicted had become naturalized U.S. citizens.

The report states that officials must "continue to enhance our screening and vetting" as well as "continually vet those who are here," including legal permanent residents and others who were naturalized, according to DHS secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who appeared Tuesday before the Senate judiciary committee.

"This report is a clear reminder of why we cannot continue to rely on immigration policy based on pre-9/11 thinking that leaves us woefully vulnerable to foreign-born terrorists," Nielsen said in a statement.

The joint agency report was called up by the President in the same executive order that banned immigrants from several Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S.

It essentially contradicts a DHS report leaked last year that did not support the administration's position that individuals from the affected countries disproportionately threaten the U.S.

The report leaked last year found that citizens from the original seven countries are rarely implicated in U.S.-based terrorism plots.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions applauded the report released on Tuesday, noting that there are thousands of ongoing terror-related investigations.

"This report reveals an indisputable sobering reality — our immigration system has undermined our national security and public safety," said Attorney General Sessions. "And the information in this report is only the tip of the iceberg: we currently have terrorism-related investigations against thousands of people in the United States, including hundreds of people who came here as refugees."

The report does not touch on the question of whether American-born or foreign-born terrorists have caused more deaths in recent years.

A report from the Cato Institute estimates that more than three times as many people were killed in terrorist attacks by native-born Americans than foreign-born individuals between the 9/11 attacks and the end of 2015.