



## Let them in

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The Supreme Court ruled in favor of President Donald Trump's travel ban in a 5-4 decision last Tuesday.

With this decision, the Supreme Court has granted broad authority to the executive branch to decide who is allowed into the country, even on the basis of religion or race, categories that are strictly protected under the U.S. Constitution.

Regardless of the constitutionality — and just because the Supreme Court grants the president authority, does not make that authority constitutional — the travel ban was an egregious violation of human rights.

While the travel ban was superficially neutral on the issue of religion, the fact remains that every country included in the ban was a majority-Muslim nation. The original list included Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, all countries either impoverished by war or U.S. adversaries.

Even the Supreme Court has agreed that facially-neutral laws are unconstitutional if the true intent behind them is to discriminate, as it did in 1993 when it struck down a law banning cruelty to animals because it targeted members of the Santeria religion.

When it comes to the travel ban, motive and context must be considered. Trump's own statements and the words of his advisors reveal the true motive was a ban on Muslims.

Trump called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" in December 2015. On Fox News in January 2017, Rudy Giuliani, then Trump's cybersecurity advisor, said, "When (Trump) first announced it, he said, 'Muslim ban' ... he said, 'Put a commission together, show me the right way to do it legally.'"

Make no mistake: The travel ban is a Muslim ban.

When the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the travel ban in February 2017, they said the government presented “no evidence that any alien from any of the countries named in the Order has perpetrated a terrorist attack in the United States.”

According to the Cato Institute, citizens from the seven countries were responsible for exactly zero deadly terrorist attacks from 1975 to 2015. Even if we could point to an incident in which members of the seven countries killed Americans, the chances of you being killed in a terrorist attack are 1 in 3.6 million. The chances of you being killed by a refugee are 1 in 3.64 billion. And finally, the chances of you being killed by an undocumented immigrant are 1 in 10 billion.

If we want a free and open society, we must be willing to accept free and open borders. For much of the United States’ history, our borders were open to all who could travel here. They did not escape discrimination once here, but the same brutal border enforcement that exists today — one that separates families and denies refuge to those escaping horrible conditions in their native countries — did not exist then.

Fear of the outsider drives ugly nationalist rhetoric that has sparked violence against foreigners or anyone who “looks” like a foreigner.

Compassion and empathy for those who’ve had to endure the devastation of war and genocide, often a direct or indirect result of U.S. military operations overseas, must supersede fear of the outsider.

To preserve human rights and religious freedom, the U.S. must let them in.