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## Let's Be Clear: This is a Muslim Ban

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**By Alexandra Funk\***

On Friday, 27 January, President Trump signed an [executive order](#) – “Protection Of The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” – that suspended entry to the U.S. for any refugee for 120 days; indefinitely halted entry for Syrian refugees; and imposed a 90-day immigration ban for citizens of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. Individuals with visas or permanent residences within the U.S. are also affected, and many were detained at airports. The American Civil Liberties Union successfully [challenged](#) this provision in court on Saturday, 28 January, and a federal judge temporarily blocked part of the order, allowing a number of those detained to enter the United States. However, the Department of Homeland Security stated that while it would comply with judicial rulings, it would still enforce all aspects of the executive order.

*This is a Muslim Ban*

As much as Trump and his administration disguise their aims as being oriented toward protecting Americans and countering terrorism, this executive order works to keep Muslims out of the U.S., and it is intended to do so.

Throughout Trump's campaign, he repeatedly [advocated](#) for a Muslim ban. Rudolph Giuliani, a prominent White House advisor, [explicitly told](#) Fox News that Trump tasked him to create a commission of expert lawyers to determine how to legally institute a Muslim ban. These facts should serve as a lens through which to view this executive order. The realities of governing differ from those of campaigning, and signing an order explicitly banning Muslims is politically perilous. This toned-down version, then, is a means to practically ban Muslims by using language that one might be able to rally behind. An executive order that comes under the ostensible purpose of pursuing national security offers legitimacy, and this is how leaders like Paul Ryan can justify their [support](#).

By analyzing the executive order and Trump's statements, however, it is clear that this is about Islam. After all, it simply cannot revolve around terrorism alone. Terrorism as a tactic of violence has been used since the [first century](#), and has since been employed by individuals of any number of religions and nationalities. People intent upon using terroristic tactics can come from anywhere, and the decision to block entry into the U.S. for citizens of specific countries in the name of fighting terror must be based upon a fundamentally flawed understanding of terrorism.

The order's text and the President's words, however, show this executive action to be the Muslim ban that it is. This begins with the fact that it bans over 130 million people from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. On the same day that these restrictions were enacted, though, Trump [spoke](#) about wanting to admit more Christian refugees from among the countries whose citizens are now *persona non grata*. Trump's declaration that he hopes to [“admit those into our country who will support our country, and love deeply our people.”](#) spoken after his signature blocked access to that country for millions of the world's most vulnerable people, suggests that somehow the predominantly Muslim countries from whence they might have come are unable to offer up anybody who love and support the United States. This order bans entire nationalities that predominantly identify as Muslim, while Trump simultaneously speaks of welcoming Christians from among them. This further suggests that he is intentionally targeting Muslims, and that it is only Islam that he believes can be terroristic.

*“Keeping Americans Safe”*

Trump's executive order represents the institutional persecution of individuals ascribing to one religion, under the guise of “keeping Americans safe.” His order is not based upon any policy or academic understanding of terrorism. Instead, Trump is equating one of the world's largest religions with terrorism. Trump's administration is pushing [Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization's](#) narrative, an idea that the division among people and states is a cultural, and, thus, religious identity. Here, terrorism is falsely presented as inherently Islamic, while terrorism in reality is [inherently political](#). Trump is refusing to acknowledge the political and social root causes that work to bring terrorism into being. Nor does he understand that the language he employs in this order and in public statements can be exploited as a recruiting mechanism by organizations that utilize terrorist tactics.

Furthermore, the claim that refugees make Americans unsafe is not factually supported. [Over three million refugees](#) have been resettled in the U.S. since 1975, making the year-over-year chance of dying in a terrorist attack perpetrated by a refugee approximately [1 in 3.64 billion](#). In fact, a [number of refugees](#) have joined the U.S. military, and fought beside American-born citizens.

Immigration and refugee resettlement actually benefits cities and their economies. [Studies](#) have shown that wages [are lifted](#) when refugees join the work force in advanced economies. People like [Sayed Soheil Saeedi Saravi](#), an Iranian scientist who was en route to his Harvard fellowship studying cardiovascular medicine, are a benefit to the U.S., not a detriment.

#### *A Disgrace to Religious Freedom*

America is built upon religious freedom. It is a defining pillar of the Constitution, and is a key element of both the Republican and Democratic parties' platforms. Trump and his administration have stained the very principle of religious freedom for which the U.S. stands – or once stood.

This executive order violates the U.S. Constitution and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), which the U.S. is party to despite [attaching](#) an unprecedented amount of reservations, understandings, and declarations. It should not take courage to stand up to Trump and against this shameful and immoral action, but rather the most basic human decency. Last Friday, America shut its doors to Syrian children fleeing from a deadly conflict; it turned its back to Yemeni civilians who have seen their [hospitals](#) and [marketplaces](#) bombed using explosives manufactured in the U.S. and sold to Saudi Arabia; it denied thousands of people who could better the U.S. economy; and it betrayed the very ideals and principles upon which it was founded and without which it can never be made great.

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