

What is the 'Muslim Ban'?

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events



Topic Summary

UPDATE (June 2018): Since early 2017 when President Trump's original Executive Order was blocked, there have been several revised versions of the ban. These versions, which have gone through various court challenges, included the following changes: excluded some countries from the original ban; added two non-Muslim majority countries and varied some of the restrictions by country. In January 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments on the latest version of the travel ban and on June 26, 2018, voted (in a 5-to-4 vote) to uphold the constitutionality of the third version of the Muslim ban. The Court held that the

President was within his authority when he blocked travel from several Muslim-majority countries. Justice Sonia Sotomayor, delivering the dissent, said, "Taking all the relevant evidence together, a reasonable observer would conclude that the Proclamation was driven primarily by anti-Muslim animus, rather than by the Government's asserted national-security justifications."

On January 27, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order called "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" which is intended to screen out "radical Islamic terrorists." The Executive Order includes the following: (1) suspend admission of all refugees for 120 days while a new system is put in place to tighten vetting, (2) ban the entry of foreign nationals for 90 days from seven majority Muslim countries: Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Iran and (3) halt the flow of refugees from Syria until further notice. At first, the order was interpreted to mean that even lawful permanent residents (also known as green card holders) who were from those seven countries could not enter the United States.

The morning after the executive order was issued, immigration agents detained two Iraqis at JFK Airport in New York City. Two New York Congress people, Nydia Velazquez and Jerrold Nadler, went to the airport and, with attorneys, tried to assist the Iraqi detainees. Word spread throughout social media about their plight and people came to JFK Airport to protest the executive order and bring attention to the ban. The Department of Homeland Security reported that there were 109 people denied entry into the United States, and 173 people who had been abroad and were trying to get back to the United States were not allowed to board their flights. Protestors gathered at airports across the country to demand the detainees' release and the rescinding of the ban, including: Chicago, Seattle, Newark, Fairfax, Denver, Chicago, Dallas, Portland, OR, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and others. Demonstrations continued on Sunday at airports and other locations around the country, including Washington, D.C. and Boston.

Hundreds of attorneys showed up at U.S. airports all over the country to offer free legal help to the travelers and family members of loved ones detained under President Trump's executive order. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), along with other organizations, immediately challenged Trump's executive order in court. They got a hearing at a Federal Court in Brooklyn, NY on January 28 and the judge issued a stay, which blocked President Trump's policy from taking effect and prevented refugees and immigrants from being deported. In addition, a handful of other federal judges have temporarily blocked parts of the order.

In Congress, Democrats emphatically denounced Trump's executive order. So far, sixteen Republicans in Congress have publicly criticized the Executive Order. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer vowed to introduce legislation in Congress to overturn Trump's executive order.

On January 29, Trump issued a statement claiming that the executive order is not a 'Muslim ban.' The statement read: "To be clear, this is not a Muslim ban, as the media is falsely reporting. This is not about religion - this is about terror and keeping our country safe." However, on FOX News shortly after the executive order was issued, Rudy Giuliani, an early Trump supporter and current White House cyber security adviser, stated that President Trump talked with him about wanting a "Muslim ban" and requested he assemble a commission to show him "the right way to do it legally." In addition, the order explicitly says that they will prioritize people who are part of the country's minority religion and who are facing persecution as a result of their religion.

On February 3, a federal judge in Seattle, WA temporarily blocked President Trump's executive order from being enforced nationwide. The White House vowed to fight the decision, calling it an "outrageous" ruling. Two days later, a Federal Appeals Court rejected a request by the Justice Department to immediately restore President Trump's executive order and instead asked the state of Washington and the Trump administration to file more arguments by February 6.

The ruling means that refugees and travelers from seven predominantly Muslim nations would, for now, continue to be able to enter the United States.

Age

13 and up

Questions to Start the Conversation

- What do you think about the executive order that Trump signed?
- What do you think he is trying to do with the order?
- What more do you want to know about it?
- In what ways do you think the protesters, ACLU and attorneys have made a difference?
- Why do you think so many different kinds of people are upset about this executive order?

Questions to Dig Deeper

(See the Additional Resources section for articles and information that address these questions.)

- What message do you think is conveyed by this executive order?
- What impact do you think the Muslim ban will have on immigration to this country and to the Muslim world?
- What do you think people should do to express their support or disagreement?

Ideas for Taking Action

Ask: What can we do to help? What actions might make a difference?

- Reach out to people in your school or community who may feel scared or threatened by this ban to let them know that you stand in solidarity with them.
- Educate others about the “Muslim ban” by sharing information on social media, having individual conversations with other students or organizing an educational forum in school, such as inviting constitutional experts to discuss the ban.
- Donate money or organize a fundraiser to support organizations that are helping refugees such as: [Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees](#), [Jewish Coalition for Syrian Refugees](#), [HIAS](#), [International Rescue Committee](#) or [USA for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#).
- Find out about activism happening nationally as well as in your area by visiting [Women's March](#) and [Daily Action](#) websites.

Additional Resources

- [The ‘Muslim Ban’ and the Power of Protest](#) (ADL Lesson Plan)
- [We Were Strangers Too: Learning about Refugees through Art](#) (ADL Lesson Plans)
- [Refugee Crisis in Europe: How Should the World Respond?](#) (ADL Lesson Plan)
- [Anti-Muslim Bigotry and Being an Ally](#) (ADL Lesson Plan)
- [Myths and Facts about Muslim People and Islam](#)
- [10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism](#)