

New Executive Order Restricting Refugee Resettlement

Background and Talking Points

- The Trump administration recently announced an executive order that would severely limit refugee resettlement, defying the best American tradition of being a place of refuge for those fleeing persecution.
- The order decrees the following measures:
 - Pausing the entire refugee resettlement program for 120 days.
 - Halting all visas, immigrant and non-immigrant, for 30 days from seven countries that would be "detrimental to the interests of the United States." These countries are Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and Sudan – all Muslim-majority nations.
 - Providing exceptions for religious minorities, mainly Christians.
 - Halting the admittance of Syrian refugees until the President determines that doing so aligns with "the national interest."
 - Capping the total number of refugees to be resettled in 2017 at 50,000.
- This executive order will punish civilians and victims fleeing acts of terror as if they are responsible for perpetrating acts of terror, while also unfairly targeting Muslims simply because of their faith.
- In September 2016, President Obama announced a refugee resettlement goal of 110,000 refugees for 2017. President Trump's executive order slashes this number in half.
- In 2016, the United States resettled 85,000 refugees, including over 12,000 Syrian refugees.

Jewish Values and This Week's Parshah

Torah Portion Va'era, Exodus 6:10-13

"Adonai spoke to Moses saying, "Go and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart his land." But Moses appealed to Adonai saying, "The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me, a man of impeded speech!" So Adonai spoke to both Moses and Aaron in regard to the Israelites and Pharaoh instructing them to deliver the Israelites from the land of Egypt."

In this moment of outrage and horror of closing our gates to the vulnerable and tired we are without words. We are tongue tied and speechless. But as we learn from this week's Torah portion, we must speak up and speak out against atrocities. When we are feeling unable to articulate our message, we must call upon our brothers and sisters to stand together and strengthen our voice of justice.

Resources

- In response to the executive order, RAC Director, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, released a statement commenting, "Ensuring our security and fulfilling our highest aspirations as a nation rooted in compassion and committed to religious freedom are not mutually exclusive. Policies such as those promulgated by President Trump in this expected executive order unjustly and falsely create the impression that all Muslims pose a security threat. Attacks on one faith are attacks on all faiths, and we stand with our Muslim friends and allies in rejecting such egregious suggestions." [You can read the full statement here.](#)
- [Take action by urging President Trump to rescind this executive order, and urge your Members of Congress to robustly support refugee resettlement.](#) Urge others to also take this action.
- For more information on [refugee](#) and [immigration](#) issues, you can visit the RAC's issue pages.
- To quickly find and act on the Reform Movement's most urgent action alerts and resources, [visit our Urgency of Now page](#), which is updated in real-time. Check back frequently for new and additional ways to take action.