

Center for Constitutional Rights

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://ccrjustice.org/yaji>

Policy Issue Resources

CCR's Yemeni American Justice Initiative (YAJI) is a project that aims to address the systemic obstacles faced by Yemeni-Americans and their families due to the heightened scrutiny directed at those communities by U.S. government authorities, particularly in the context of immigration, naturalization, and law enforcement. Over the past few years, Yemeni-Americans have been subject to extensive delays in the processing of visas and naturalization petitions, have faced additional hurdles in obtaining immigration benefits, and are subject to arbitrary and unlawful revocations of their U.S. passports. Yemeni-Americans are additionally subject to questioning and informant recruitment at the border during travels, or at home. The war in Yemen has only exacerbated the situation faced by Americans with relatives in Yemen seeking to enter the United States, as the U.S. consulate in Sanaa has closed down, and their cases have been transferred to Djibouti and elsewhere.

These problems have become especially acute with the implementation of Trump's Muslim Ban. Currently, thousands of Yemenis are stranded abroad, banned from entering the country, and deprived of meaningful recourse. Among those stuck abroad are U.S. citizens simply seeking to unite with their loved ones in the U.S. but now unable to do so. The Muslim Ban follows from already-entrenched immigration and law-enforcement policies targeting Yemeni communities. Although Yemeni-Americans represent a significant immigrant population in the United States, they have historically been underserved.

CCR's Yemeni American Justice Initiative aims to fill this gap by assessing the Yemeni community's legal and advocacy needs, identifying opportunities for intervention, engaging in advocacy to support communities, and strengthening the connections between the community and organizations positioned to assist and empower it.

The obstacles the Yemeni-American communities face are manifold and complex, thus the approach taken by YAJI is similarly multifaceted, combining legal tools with non-legal advocacy such as creating resources, community outreach, and fact-finding projects.

YAJI's legal and non-legal advocacy projects include:

[A View from the Ground: Stories of Families Separated by the Presidential Proclamation](#)

CCR files *Alobahy v. Trump* alleging that the government unlawfully, retroactively applied the Muslim Ban, or Presidential Proclamation 9645, to Yemeni-American families, who already had approved visas at the time the ban went into effect. Shortly after filing, all three clients were granted their visas and have since been reunited in the United States.

Media Coverage and Resources:

[Official numbers obtained by Sen. Van Hollen from the Department of State re: Waivers. As of April 2019, only 6% of waiver requests were granted.](#)

[CCR Client Profiled in the New York Times](#)

CCR's [Yemeni-American Clients speak on DemocracyNow!](#)

[CCR Study Explores the Impacts of Visa Delays on Yemeni Families in Djibouti](#)

[CCR Condemns Trump Administration's Recent Blanket Denial of Visas to Yemeni Family Members](#)

[Attorneys Demand Clarity as Hundreds Seeking Refuge from War in Yemen Stranded, Unable to Rejoin Families in U.S.](#)

[Reuters Exclusive: Visa waivers rarely granted under Trump's latest U.S. travel ban: data](#)

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