

Center for Constitutional Rights

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/blog/2017/10/18/nomuslimbanever-stop-separating-families>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The CCR blog

Today, CCR staff members are among the hundreds marching in the national #NoMuslimBanEver mobilization in DC, from the White House to the Trump Hotel. While we celebrate that yesterday a federal judge in Hawaii temporarily blocked Trump's third iteration of the Muslim Ban, the struggle to overturn it is not over, and we know it is vital to continue to send an unequivocal message to this administration that we will not stop resisting racist and inhumane policies. The following are prepared remarks for today's rally by CCR legal worker [Ibrahim Qatabi](#).

Today, I stand in front of you as an American and as the son of Yemeni immigrants. My great-grandfather and my family immigrated to the United States almost a century ago, as did many Yemeni-American families. My grandfather, now a retiree, worked for the Ford Motor Company in Buffalo, New York where he was making America great from the start.

Today, I have grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, brothers and sisters living all over the United States, from New York to North Carolina to Michigan and Connecticut. The scattering of my family is not unique. It is the story of many Americans like me whose lineage is composed of immigrant ancestors who arrived in the United States to pursue their version of the American dream.

The story of my family is typical. We are as American as American can get. But the existence of Trump's Muslim ban implies that my family and community members are deemed undeserving of constitutional protection because of our place of origin and religion.

Let me share with you a story. A family member and Yemeni-American woman is stranded abroad for almost four years, awaiting visas for her now ten and eleven-year-old son and daughter. The mother was born in Brooklyn and so were her other two children. However, her ten and eleven-year-old children were born in Yemen. In 2014, while waiting for the U.S. embassy in Yemen to respond to her visa requests, a civil war broke out in Yemen. It was no longer safe for the family to live there. The mother had to escape Yemen with her four children and seek safety from war and relief from the famine.

Even though she is an American citizen, her children born in Yemen had to go through extreme vetting, waiting for more than three years to be granted just an interview at the U.S. embassy. Weeks later after the interview was finally granted instead of receiving a call to get the visas, she got a request from the embassy to submit DNA evidence proving her biological relation to her own children, adding additional financial burdens and delays. The DNA results came back, confirming that they were indeed her children, and yet her case is still placed under so-called administrative review.

The question is: why is our government forcing children to go through extreme vetting just to be reunited with their mother in the U.S.? If that is not pure, hateful discrimination and bigotry, then what is? Had the mother not been of Yemeni descent and a Muslim, her story would have been different.

The story of this young mother is one among hundreds. Today, for the third time in the span of a few months, family members and hundreds of Yemeni Americans are left stranded in Djibouti, Egypt, Malaysia, Algeria and elsewhere waiting to enter the United States. They have escaped war, starvation, and fear. This treatment and visa delays have caused families to be separated and added financial hardships. And now Trump is trying to ban them altogether from entering the U.S., solely because of their country of origin.

Long before the ban, Yemeni Americans had already been systematically targeted by the immigration and domestic law enforcement agencies. Yemeni-American citizens and green card holders have been excessively questioned at airports, placed on no-fly lists, and witnessed unusual delays in processing immigration benefits. Others have even had their U.S. passports revoked without any due process. They have been increasingly and specifically targeted post-9/11 by U.S. domestic and foreign counterterrorism policies.

Trump's Muslim ban causes far more damage than anyone can imagine. While it destroys the U.S. global image, it emboldens racists to carry out their actions freely with backing from the government. The ban normalizes and institutionalizes discrimination and targets the most vulnerable in our society.

As many of you know, this ban is not about the security and the protection of Americans. Instead, this Muslim ban is a form of extreme vetting intended to delay and prevent spouses and children of U.S. citizens' entry to the country. It is a complete suspension of the law. This ban is creating a poisonous environment of fear, and more distrust of the government. It is dividing our communities and fomenting hate among groups.

Let's not forget that not too long ago, Japanese Americans were put in internment camps for wars they did not create and crimes they did not commit. Now Muslim Americans are the target. We cannot and will not allow this history to be repeated on a different group of people.

Trump is turning discriminatory policies into laws and dreams into nightmares under the slogan of America First. It must be stopped. His latest aim was designed to divide us from our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and children. To separate us indefinitely. Are these the American family valueshe claims to champion?

What we need today is not only to stop Trumps unconstitutional Muslim ban, butto hold the government accountablefor abusive policies that targetour families and community. It is time for the other branches of government to carry out their duties and to stand up.Beyond challenging the ban, we also need to challenge less overt discriminatorypractices, such asextreme vetting, visaprocessing delays, and passport revocations that exclusively target Muslim and particularly Yemeni communities.Every American who believes in the ideals of this great nation, the constitution, the rule of law, democracy, freedom, liberty, and justice for all should be outraged.

We must all stand in solidarity with one another and stand against bigotry, discrimination, and racism in all of its forms. We must not be fooled when national security is unjustly and unlawfully used to suspend civil liberties of its citizens.

And lets remember what Martin Luther King said once: Injusticeanywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

Thank you.

[View the discussion thread.](#)

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