



Response to Executive Order 13796

Executive Order 13796, signed January 27, 2017 by President Trump, bans all visitors from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen; suspends the US policy on refugees; bans all Syrian refugees, and calls for an expansion of screening procedures for all immigrants to the United States.

The Order was challenged and partially blocked almost immediately by the ACLU and by lawyers representing individual states; we will continue to follow legal developments in the hope that it will be completely overturned.

Whether this particular Executive Order stands or falls, however, the Department of Peace Studies stands in opposition to any additional obstacles placed on people seeking to visit the United States: as visitors, students, faculty, visiting scholars, immigrants, or refugees.

The members of the Department of Peace Studies stand for the free and friendly exchange of people and ideas, a basic requirement in the pursuit of peace. Preventing that exchange leads to misunderstanding and too often leads to violent conflict. The Executive Order, and any similar obstacles that prevent scholars and students from traveling freely, will therefore increase conflict and the threat of violence.

Peace cannot be achieved and maintained in a climate of fear. The faculty of Peace Studies believes that the people of the United States will prosper only if we continue to welcome people and ideas of different cultures, and only if we continue to affirm human rights. Living in a free and open society entails certain risks, but the alternative – censorship, closed borders, rejection of those with different backgrounds and beliefs – is far worse.

Finally, the members of the Department of Peace Studies call for actions that address the needs of refugees, especially the victims of genocide, atrocities, and other gross violations of human rights. The injustice of their suffering is intolerable.