

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

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The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (Network) is an alliance of more than 80 national academies and scholarly societies. One of its goals is to promote the free exchange of ideas between members of the global scientific community and foster collaborative educational, research, and human rights endeavors. As such, we, the members of the Network's Executive Committee, are deeply concerned about the detrimental impact of U.S. President Donald Trump's Executive Order—*Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*—for international scientific research and collaboration. The Order, issued on January 27, temporarily bans nationals of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, and all refugees, from entering the United States and creates an indefinite ban on entry of refugees from Syria. In a statement made on 1 February, a group of United Nations human rights experts stated that the Order “is clearly discriminatory based on one’s nationality...and risks people being returned, without proper individual assessments and asylum procedures, to places in which they risk being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, in direct contravention of international humanitarian and human rights laws which uphold the principle of non-refoulement.”

As scientists, we are acutely aware of the vital role that international collaboration among scientists and scholars plays in furthering scientific progress for human advancement. Significant scientific, medical, and technological breakthroughs increasingly come about as a result of the joint efforts of diverse teams of international researchers, including refugees. The Executive Order threatens to damage existing international scientific relationships and presents impediments to building new ones, with long-term repercussions for the ability of scientists to address societal problems.

The lack of clarity about the implications of the Executive Order for ongoing scientific research and collaboration is also having a chilling effect within the international scientific community and creating severe difficulties for individual scientists and scholars. We are concerned that, as a result of the Executive Order, scientists living in the United States, who are nationals of the above-named countries, are now afraid to travel internationally for fear that they may not be permitted to return to the United States. Likewise, scientists who happened to be abroad at the time the Order was signed have experienced great difficulties returning to the United

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

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States. Students and young investigators from the targeted countries have experienced similar problems.

We call upon the United States government to revise its policy on border entry to take into account the enormous value of international scientific research and exchange, which is essential for identifying and addressing challenges facing the global community. More generally, we call upon the United States government to revise this policy to ensure its conformity with international human rights laws, including laws that recognize the special rights of refugees.

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