President Trump’s Revised Executive Order on Immigration and Refugees Continues to Persecute and Discriminate Against Muslims

Today, President Trump signed a revised version of his executive order banning large numbers of immigrants from six predominantly Muslim nations from entering the United States. Like the first version released in late January, the new measure relies on largely unsubstantiated allegations regarding national security to justify the discriminatory denial of entry to persons based on their faith and national origin. Accordingly, the updated executive order from the White House fails to cure the constitutional violations that federal courts found in challenges to the original order and violates basic principles of fairness and equality.

The updated order, which goes into effect on March 16, bars virtually all non-visa-holders from Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Iran, and Syria and suspends the United States refugee program for 120 days. The initial order, which the new order largely follows, caused nationwide chaos and was deemed discriminatory by civil rights groups and elected officials across the country, before being put on hold by a federal judge last month.

LDF stands firm in our unwavering and longstanding belief that any policy that discriminates on the basis of race, origin or religious belief is wholly unconstitutional. President Trump and his administration have not hidden the fact that, from its inception, this order was designed to discriminate against Muslims. There is no concrete evidence to support an order of this nature, which still traumatizes, persecutes and potentially separates many American families. Not a single conviction or arrest has followed the Justice Department’s recent identification of 300 “refugees” currently under investigation for their supposed links to terrorism; nor would Homeland Security or Justice Department officials provide further details on whether any of the six countries covered in the updated executive order were connected to the investigations.

We note as well that this order may have a profound effect on Black communities. The Pew Research Center estimates that nearly 30 percent of American Muslims report their race as Black.

This order is released in a context of a deepening climate of xenophobia and hate crimes. There has been a significant uptick in hate-related activities since the beginning of Mr. Trump’s Presidential campaign. The Southern Poverty Law Center documented 867 bias-related incidents, including over 300 targeted at immigrants or Muslims, in the first ten days after the election. Similarly, FBI statistics show hate crimes aimed at Muslims grew 67% in 2015. This ban serves to only to perpetuate a climate which supports these activities.

LDF remains committed to partnering with our allies in resisting policies created directly out of inflammatory and hate-mongering rhetoric and Islamophobia.
Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative.