

Dear President Biden,

As we mark one year of your administration, the undersigned 108 immigrants' rights, civil rights and civil liberties, and community-based organizations committed to protecting the rights of Muslim, African, Arab, Iranian, Middle Eastern and South Asian communities write to urge you to provide relief to those who have been impacted by Trump's Muslim and African Bans that you rescinded one year ago. It was a historic victory by and for the communities that we serve that you made rescinding the bans - and acknowledging their countless harms and that they serve as a "stain on our national conscience" - a day one priority for your administration. We remain grateful to you for fulfilling this campaign promise. Without further action to provide relief beyond rescinding the bans, however, our communities continue to remain impacted by the bans.

It has been over five long years since the Trump administration issued its first discriminatory Muslim Ban in January 2017. Multiple iterations followed, including an expansion in January 2020, targeting primarily African countries. At the end of the Trump administration, the Muslim and African Bans barred certain nationals from Burma (Myanmar), Eritrea, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania and Yemen from entering the United States. Thousands of families have been separated for years, including those who had long awaited visa interviews to join their families in the United States, and individuals seeking job opportunities and urgent medical care had to put their lives and well-being on hold. Over [41,000 visa applicants](#) from the banned countries were denied as a result of the Muslim and African Bans. In addition, people who won their diversity visa-- which predominantly helps people from Africa and Asia to come to the U.S.--were denied this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for themselves and their families.

Directly impacted communities played a central role in fighting these discriminatory bans and courageously shared their experiences of family separation and the stigma of being marked as unwanted in this country to ensure that these bans would eventually be rescinded. It was a moment of triumph and relief to see the bans rescinded. This relief however, has been short-lived, as most of the families and individuals impacted by the ban remain separated. As we have just marked the first anniversary of the rescission of the Muslim and African Bans, we urge you to take immediate steps to provide meaningful relief to those harmed by the bans. While we cannot quantify the harm to the countless number of people who were deterred from ever applying for visas while the bans were in place, it is crucial that this administration fulfill its promise to right the wrongs of the Trump administration by providing relief to those who applied for but either never received or were denied visas that they would have qualified for but for these bans. To those ends, we ask your administration to:

**Provide Clarity for Communities:**

- State Department issue clear guidance regarding next steps for applicants denied under the Muslim and African Bans, including publicly releasing the report to the White House that was ordered in President Biden's instructions in his January 20, 2021 proclamation requiring the Secretary of State to "provide to the President a report" and any related guidance, policy memos, or implementing instructions.

**Redress Harm for those Denied Before January 20, 2020:**

- Immediately and automatically reconsider, reopen, and expedite all immigrant and non-immigrant visa applications subject to the Muslim and African Bans that have not yet been granted, including those denied during FY 17 - FY 20.
- Provide all applicants of this reconsideration and review an opportunity to supplement their applications, if necessary, for a complete review, and of the final outcome of the review.
- Do not require new applications or fees for non-immigrant visas, treating these applications as not constituting final denials as of January 20, 2020. This is consistent with the position taken by the prior administration in litigation, and would ensure that these prior applications are not treated as denials or as being subject to any prejudicial effect for any future applications.
- In addition to waiving application fees, reimburse travel expenses for those rejected under PP 9645.

**Diversity Visas:**

- Grant humanitarian parole to those who won the diversity visa lottery from FY 17 through FY 22, but whose visas were not issued as a result of the bans or related State Department guidance. Many people received notice that they won the diversity visa lottery and went through a financially, emotionally and physically arduous application process, only to be denied because of the Muslim and African Bans with no recourse after the repeals. For these individuals and their families, they may never have another opportunity to come to the United States again. Humanitarian parole will give Congress more time to authorize green cards for the impacted people.
- Request that Congress authorize green cards for this population, as included in the Build Back Better package that passed the House.

**Restoration of Consular Services:**

- Issue State Department guidance to all consular staff that makes clear that core elements of the State Department's mission is to unify families, provide safety to those in harm's way, and to serve a welcoming role to all people, regardless of their nationality;
- Any guidance should also instruct consular staff to exercise their discretionary authority and decision-making in ways that are consistent with these overarching goals;

- Ensure that consular services are restored for visa applicants from banned countries. Iranian students, in particular, have very few opportunities to secure appointments and their visas, leading many to defer enrollment or miss out entirely on their admission to U.S. colleges and universities.
- Set a goal to restore the issuance of visas to targeted communities to prior levels.

**Address Harmful Policies that may lay the Groundwork for Future Bans:**

- Waive discriminatory Visa Waiver Program restrictions (H.R. 158) on dual nationals that paved the way for the Muslim ban and were disingenuously used by the last administration to deflect criticism.
- Eliminate the policy of rejecting Iranian nationals as automatically inadmissible based on their compulsory military service.
- End “Extreme Vetting” policies and ensure they cannot be made mandatory for specific nationals.

One year on from the rescission of the bans, we strongly urge you to take the steps outlined above to provide long overdue relief to the thousands who remain harmed by them.

Sincerely,  
 No Muslim Ban Ever Campaign  
 National Iranian American Council

18 Million Rising  
 Action Center on Race & the Economy (ACRE)  
 Advocating Opportunity  
 African Communities Together  
 American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
 American Immigration Lawyers Association  
 American Muslim Bar Association  
 American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN)  
 Arab American Association of New York  
 Arab American Civic Council  
 Armenian-American Action Network  
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus  
 Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence  
 Black Alliance for Just Immigration  
 Bridges Faith Initiative  
 California Immigrant Policy Center  
 Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Central Valley Islamic Council  
Church Women United in New York State  
Church World Service  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Community Change Action  
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible  
COOLJC Region 8 SJEREC  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Council on American Islamic Relations-San Francisco Bay Area  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC  
Eden United Church of Christ  
Emgage Action  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)  
Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) Action  
Faith in Public Life  
First Focus on Children  
Franciscan Action Network  
Freedom Network USA  
Georgia Muslim Voter Project  
Hope Border Institute  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas  
ICNA Council for Social Justice  
Immigration Hub  
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio  
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)  
Iranian American Bar Association  
Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno  
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)  
Islamophobia Studies Center  
Jahajee Sisters  
JAMAAT -- Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together  
Justice Action Center  
Justice for Muslims Collective  
Legal Aid Justice Center

Migrant Center for Human Rights  
Milwaukee Zen Center  
MPower Change  
MSA West  
Muslim Advocates  
Muslim American Society-Public Affairs and Civic Engagement  
Muslim Justice League  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project  
Oxfam America  
Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
Presbytery of San Francisco  
Presidents' Alliance for Higher Education and Immigration  
Project South  
Public Counsel  
Revolutionary Love Project  
Rian Immigrant Center  
Santa Cruz Welcoming Network  
Save the Children  
Secure Justice  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants  
Sisters of Mercy  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
South Asian Public Health Association (SAPHA)  
South Dakota Voices for Peace  
Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
The Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign  
UndocuBlack Network  
Union of Arab American Women

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights  
Voice for Refuge Action Fund  
Win Without War  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
World Education Services  
Yemeni American Merchants Association  
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights