

## Press Release

### **The Travel Ban and the Politics of Fear**

The Trump administration announced on December 15, 2025, a significant expansion of its travel ban policy, set to take effect on January 1, 2026. According to the White House, nationals from six additional countries including Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, Syria and holders of Palestinian Authority (PA) travel documents will not be eligible to enter the United States. With this announcement, citizens of 19 countries in total and PA will not be issued visas with some exceptions, which include individuals whose entry is deemed to “serve U.S. national interests.”

The administration has justified the expansion by citing national security concerns, including alleged deficiencies in immigrant screening and vetting procedures, poor information sharing practices by foreign governments, high rates of visa overstays, and misalignment between U.S. counterterrorism objectives and the policies of the affected countries.

Beyond security-based explanations, the administration argues that the travel ban expansion serves broader political objectives. With Trump’s approval rating at a historic low, estimated at 39% according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll, the move is aimed at energizing a declining political base. Additional polling from ABC News indicates waning enthusiasm among core Republican and MAGA supporters, largely attributed to a declining economy.

By expanding restrictions on immigration, the administration appears to reinforce campaign promises centered on job protection, border enforcement, and deportation. Immigrants, particularly those from targeted regions, have been repeatedly framed as contributors to unemployment, crime, drug trafficking, and strain on public resources. Such narratives validate fear-mongering, reinforcing public suspicion toward immigrants by portraying them as a primary source of domestic instability.

Beyond placating domestic issues, these travel bans serve as tools to exert global power and influence. The recently formed Sahel Alliance between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, aimed at regional independence and strengthening economic and political ties, impedes America’s efforts to wrestle away European influence in Africa. Even the recent bombing of Nigeria, ostensibly to “protect” Christians and prior direct threats can be seen as part of America’s plan to exert its influence in the region. Similarly, Syria and the PA’s inclusion reflects long-standing geopolitical considerations tied to American interests in the Middle East, particularly its strategic alliance with the Zionist entity.

Clearly the administration’s policies disproportionately target Muslims since 12 of the 19 countries listed are Muslim-majority countries. The ban is part of a broader pattern of Islamophobic actions, including recent efforts to designate certain Muslim groups as terrorist organizations and the detention of Muslim activists.

Historically, the United States has absorbed waves of immigrants from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, forging a shared national identity often described as the “American melting pot.” While many immigrant communities gradually assimilated, Muslims have been uniquely targeted for maintaining distinct religious and cultural identities. Despite representing a small percentage of the U.S. population, Muslims in America are noted for strong adherence to faith-based values, family cohesion, higher levels of education, and law-abiding behavior. This resistance to abandoning religious principles have subjected the Muslim community to heightened scrutiny and suspicion by both Republican and Democratic administrations.

As global dynamics shift, the United States faces growing challenges to its long-standing dominance. Such policies rooted in fear and exclusion risk undermining both America’s global standing and its foundational ideals. The expansion of the travel ban represents more than a policy decision on immigration. Rather, it reflects a convergence of political strategy, global power enforcement, domestic policy, and ideological conflict with Islam. Framing immigrants, particularly Muslims, as threats allows the administration to divert public attention from domestic challenges such as economic instability, inflation, infrastructure decay, and policy failures.

In contrast, Islam views immigration from a fundamentally different position. Rather than relying on a nationalistic identity or ethnicity, like the current nation-states, Islam with its application via a Khilafah (Caliphate) functioned as a legal and religious order based on taking care of all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, color or religion. Non-Muslims were permitted to enter and reside under a legal covenant (*dhimma*) that guaranteed protection of life and property, freedom of worship, and access to courts. Entry restrictions existed primarily for security reasons and were not based on race or ethnicity. Unlike modern immigration systems focused on labor markets, demographic management, or national identity, mobility of people in the Caliphate was primarily conditioned on observance of the law.

The Caliphate also emphasized racial inclusion and economic sufficiency as core principles. Islam explicitly rejects racial or ethnic hierarchy. Historically, the Caliphate governed diverse populations including Arabs, Africans, Persians, Turks, Caucasians, Jews, Christians and others, many of whom held high administrative and scholarly positions. Social cohesion among diverse populations was sustained for long periods under the Caliphate, and the current anti-immigrant rhetoric rooted in nationalism and demographic anxiety was absent.

A new model of governance is urgently required. The Islamic model of governance, the Caliphate, offers a divinely guided system rooted in justice and collective responsibility, ensuring care and dignity for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, color, religion, or immigration status.

## **Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir in America**