

Trump Defies Mass Protests Against Anti-Immigrant Measures

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Protests against the Trump administration's executive order banning travelers from seven majority-Muslim countries and all refugees spread across the country on Sunday, as the Homeland Security Department and immigration authorities continued to detain men, women and children denied entry to the US on the basis of the illegal executive order issued Friday by the new president.

Tens of thousands gathered at airports and city centers following initial demonstrations on Saturday after Trump and his top aides insisted the ban would be enforced despite court orders delaying the deportation of foreign citizens caught up in the anti-immigrant dragnet.

Many thousands demonstrated in New York; Los Angeles; Boston; Washington, DC and Houston. Demonstrations also took place in many Midwestern and rustbelt cities such as Cleveland, Wichita, Rochester, Minneapolis, Bloomington, Pittsburgh and Detroit.

Immigrants and legal permanent residents (green card holders) from the countries named in Friday's order remain in detention, though the exact number is not known. Immigration officials have continued to block migrants from speaking to their attorneys. They have confiscated their personal belongings and searched their phones and computers. Officials reportedly seized the medication of two 80-year-old migrants and refused to return it to them while they were in captivity, placing their lives in danger.

Three federal courts issued stays or restraining orders on the executive order banning immigration from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and Sudan. A federal court in Massachusetts ordered the administration to stop deporting and detaining migrants for seven days, while courts in Washington State and New York blocked immediate deportations but not the ongoing detainment of those entering the country.

None of the orders permanently halt the deportation program. Trump senior advisor Stephen Miller told the Associated Press that there was nothing in the court orders to "in any way impede or prevent the implementation of the president's executive order, which remains in full, complete, and total effect." Immigration officials at Washington, DC's Dulles Airport reportedly ignored the federal court order and carried through the deportation of migrants.

Samer Khalef, president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), told the *World Socialist Web Site*: "We are receiving phone calls from people whose family members are either stuck in another country or are stuck detained. They are breaking down and crying. It gets very emotional. People are fearful more than anything. Things that were previously not said in polite company are now being said by the government, normalizing

the racism of the white supremacy movements.”

One Iranian student living in the US told the *World Socialist Web Site*: “I feel disoriented and I don’t know what the future entails. My 75-year-old grandfather who lives in Tehran has two sons living in the US now, and he has never met his granddaughter. Though he had gotten approved to come visit in March, he has now been declined and I worry we will not be able to ever see him again because if we leave we won’t be let back in.”

In response to the court orders and mass demonstrations, the Trump administration pledged to fully enforce its unconstitutional program. Trump tweeted Sunday: “Our country needs strong borders and extreme vetting, NOW. Look what is happening all over Europe and, indeed, the world—a horrible mess!”

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a statement Sunday morning saying, “President Trump’s Executive Orders remain in place—prohibited travel will remain prohibited, and the US government retains its right to revoke visas at any time if required for national security or public safety.”

The DHS director, retired Marine Gen. John Kelly, issued a statement last night saying legal permanent residents could still be barred on a case-by-case basis, but that “absent the receipt of significant derogatory information indicating a serious threat to public safety and welfare,” they would generally be admitted.

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus appeared to hedge when he told NBC’s Chuck Todd: “If you’re traveling back and forth [even with a green card], you’re going to be subjected to further screening.” Priebus also said border agents would have the “discretionary authority” to question and perhaps detain US citizens. He further declared that the executive order could be expanded to include more than those countries currently impacted. “Apologies for nothing here,” he said.

NBC News reported Sunday that the White House did not confer with the Justice Department, State Department or the Department of Defense, and that administration officials prevented National Security Council attorneys from reviewing the orders before their publication. The *New York Times* reported that Customs and Border Protection and the United States Citizen and Immigration Services were notified of the order only at the time Trump signed it.

Unnamed government officials told CNN that the Department of Homeland Security was briefed on the orders only on Friday night, and that the fascist White House chief strategist, Stephen Bannon, overruled a DHS request that the orders not apply to lawful permanent residents. Bannon insisted that immigration officials could use their discretion to bar green card holders on a case-by-case basis.

The Trump administration is also considering issuing a new order that would require all “foreign visitors to disclose all websites and social media sites they visit, and to share the contacts in their cell phone,” CNN reported. “If the foreign visitor declines to share such information, he or she could be denied entry.”

Immigration attorneys have established volunteer networks to provide legal advice to migrants at many airports across the country. Shani Smith Fisher, an attorney in Los Angeles, spent several hours at the airport yesterday providing support for incoming

migrants and told the *World Socialist Web Site*: “There is a strong and enthusiastic presence from attorneys of all backgrounds. There are so many people joining the protest itself, it’s energized and there is a lot happening.”

The full extent of these orders has not yet been felt. Under the language of the orders, it is possible that immigrants from the seven named countries may be prevented not only from entering the United States, but from acquiring “other immigration benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act,” meaning they may be barred from applying for legal permanent residency or citizenship, even if they have fulfilled all legal requirements.

The exact meaning of “extreme vetting” also remains unclear, but the order notes that migrants will be evaluated based on their “ability to make contributions to the national interest,” an anti-democratic provision that will be used to bar migrants on the basis of their political views. Though immigrants can already be barred for having left-wing political views under current law, the Trump administration is poised to enforce these reactionary provisions in a manner not seen since the anti-socialist Palmer Raids of the early 1920s.

This “national interest” vetting provision will serve as a further barrier to immigrants from Muslim countries. The racial animus driving Trump’s executive orders is exposed by his decision to prioritize immigrant petitions only from Christians.

The enactment of Trump’s measures lays the basis for police state conditions of rule in the United States. The prospect of mass internment centers for processing hundreds of thousands or millions of immigrants is not a distant possibility, but an imminent threat.

The administration’s efforts to whip up a climate of anti-immigrant hysteria are a sign that the government is preparing to attack the living standards and democratic rights of the entire working class. The defense of immigrants must be carried out as part of a broader defense of democratic rights. This requires a political perspective for the unification and mobilization of the working class, regardless of nationality, religion or immigrant status, on the basis of a socialist program.

Such a fight must begin with a break with the Democratic Party, which established the legal framework Trump is using for his executive orders. The Democrats provided the necessary votes for the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which was signed by President Bill Clinton, and for the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which was supported by then-senators Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joseph Biden and Charles Schumer.

As president, Obama deported 2.5 million immigrants and placed travel restrictions on immigrants from the seven countries listed in Trump’s executive order. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer cited Obama’s action as legal authority for the Trump Muslim ban. The Obama administration either bombed, invaded or imposed brutal sanctions against all seven countries listed.

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