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Subject: SICCL Advisory - FACT SHEET: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry to the United States

Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Press Release

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Contact: DHS Press Office, 202-282-8010

FACT SHEET: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry to the United States

WASHINGTON - The executive order signed on January 27, 2017, allows for the proper review and establishment of standards to prevent terrorist or criminal infiltration by foreign nationals. The United States has the world's most generous immigration system, yet it has been repeatedly exploited by terrorists and other malicious actors who seek to do us harm. In order to ensure that the United States government can conduct a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the national security risks posed from our immigration system, it imposes a 90-day suspension on entry to the United States of nationals of certain designated countries—countries that were designated by Congress and the Obama Administration as posing national security risks in the Visa Waiver Program.

In order to protect Americans, and to advance the national interest, the United States must ensure that those entering this country will not harm the American people subsequent to their entry, and that they do not bear malicious intent toward the United States and its people. The executive order protects the United States from countries compromised by terrorism and ensures a more rigorous vetting process. This Executive Order ensures that we have a functional immigration system that safeguards our national security.

This executive order, as well as the two issued earlier in the week, provide the Department with additional resources, tools and personnel to carry out the critical work of securing our borders, enforcing the immigration laws of our nation, and ensuring that individuals who pose a threat to national security or public safety cannot enter or remain in our country. Protecting the American people is the highest priority of our government and this Department.

The Department of Homeland Security will faithfully execute the immigration laws and the President's executive order, and we will treat all of those we encounter humanely and with professionalism.

Authorities

The Congress provided the president of the United States, in section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality

Act (INA), with the authority to suspend the entry of any class of aliens the president deems detrimental to the national interest. This authority has been exercised by nearly every president since President Carter, and has been a component of immigration laws since the enactment of the INA in 1952.

Actions

For the next 90 days, nearly all travelers, except U.S. citizens, traveling from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Somalia, Libya, and Yemen will be temporarily suspended from entry to the United States. The 90 day period will allow for proper review and establishment of standards to prevent terrorist or criminal infiltration by foreign nationals.

Importantly, however, lawful permanent residents of the United States traveling on a valid I-551 will be allowed to board U.S. bound aircraft and will be assessed for exceptions at arrival ports of entry, as appropriate. The entry of these individuals, subject to national security checks, is in the national interest. Therefore, we expect swift entry for these individuals.

In the first 30 days, DHS will perform a global country-by-country review of the information each country provides when their citizens apply for a U.S. visa or immigration benefit. Countries will then have 60 days to comply with any requests from the U.S. government to update or improve the quality of the information they provide.

DHS and the Department of State have the authority, on a case-by-case basis, to issue visas or allow the entry of nationals of these countries into the United States when it serves the national interest. These seven countries were designated by Congress and the Obama Administration as posing a significant enough security risk to warrant additional scrutiny in the visa waiver context.

The Refugee Admissions Program will be temporarily suspended for the next 120 days while DHS and interagency partners review screening procedures to ensure refugees admitted in the future do not pose a security risk to citizens of the United States.

The executive order does not prohibit entry of, or visa issuance to, travelers with diplomatic visas, North Atlantic Treaty Organization visas, C-2 visas for travel to the United Nations, and G-1, G-2, G-3, and G-4 visas.

The Department of Homeland Security along with the Department of State, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation will develop uniform screening standards for all immigration programs government-wide.

Upon resumption of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, refugee admissions to the United States will not exceed 50,000 for fiscal year 2017.

The Secretary of Homeland Security will expedite the completion and implementation of a biometric entry-exit tracking system of all travelers into the United States.

Federal Government

As part of a broader set of government actions, the Secretary of State will review all nonimmigrant visa reciprocity agreements to ensure that they are, with respect to each visa classification, truly reciprocal.

The Department of State will suspend the Visa Interview Waiver Program and ensure all individuals seeking nonimmigrant visas undergo an in-person interview.

Transparency

The Department of Homeland Security, in order to be more transparent with the American people, and to more effectively implement policies and practices that serve the national interest will make information available to the public every 180 days. In coordination with the Department of Justice, DHS will provide information regarding the number of foreign nationals charged with terrorism-related offense or gender-based violence

against women while in the United States.

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