



CARPO Statement on President Trump's Visa Ban

The Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO) welcomes the recent federal district and federal appeals court decisions to block President Donald Trump's Executive Order banning people from seven Muslim-majority countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) from entry into the United States for at least 90 days. We consider this Executive Order as highly discriminatory and as undermining values of humanity in general and values that are central to successful research, education as well as policy-making in particular, such as openness, inclusion, and global exchange.

Successful policy-making and academic research rests on the continuous exchange of knowledge, analysis and perspectives derived from meetings, workshops, conferences and other exchange formats where experts, scholars and stakeholders from various backgrounds come together and engage in open discussions. President Trump's Executive Order cut off the ability for scholars and stakeholders from seven countries highly relevant in current US policy-making from participation in such exchange. Limiting access to experts and stakeholders from the respective countries by reinstating the ban would thus effectively put the quality of US policy-making on the region at risk.

For many issues relevant to policy-making, research of quality cannot be conducted without presence in the country under investigation. Many of those researchers providing high-quality analysis relevant to policy-making have an Arab or Persian background, which enhances their capacities to engage in mother-tongue conversations with respective stakeholders and to travel safely in contexts too dangerous for non-native researchers. Should the ban be reinstated, all experts and researchers on the MENA region currently living in the United States on Green Cards or visas would be unable to engage in field research so fundamental to their profession. In the long run, this could seriously damage access of US policy-makers to high quality analysis and expertise.

CARPO believes that access to high-quality education in the United States and Europe for students and researchers from the Middle East contributes to economic and political development in the region and thus makes our own countries more secure. Many of today's Middle Eastern leaders in the fields of economy, politics, research, civil society etc. once received their education in the West. They have not only brought their knowledge back home, thus contributing to raising the standards in their home country's education system, but also became ambassadors for intercultural understanding. Additionally, many have also maintained important networks and channels for dialogue with people living in the countries where they received their education. These global everyday networks, many of which are built on mutual trust and friendship, not only make our world more secure, they also make it a more beautiful place to live in.

It is through the beauty of these ties that CARPO itself has thrived and grown. We thus remain committed to the values of openness, mutual respect and trustful cooperation and will continue to engage in research and exchange with our partners in the region.