



Statement on US Executive Order on Immigration

February 5, 2017

The President of the United States has issued an executive order on immigration indefinitely banning Syrian refugees from entering the United States, suspending all refugee admissions for 120 days, and blocking the entry of citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries—Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, and Somalia—refugees or otherwise. This order has been challenged in the courts in the United States and its ongoing status and enforcement are under debate.

We the Faculty of the Cinema Studies Institute at the University of Toronto condemn this executive order. It is an affront to human rights, and is in contravention of international law, especially the United Nations Refugee Convention. Far from creating peace and security, this order contributes to a toxic international environment, increases instability, and provides ammunition for those forces that seek to sow division, fear and hatred. More fundamentally, though, it is morally reprehensible to impose this sort of policy on any country's citizens, especially those most vulnerable and in need of support.

The extraordinary nature of this order has moved us to voice our opposition to the actions of the United States government. This action affects our students, staff, and faculty at the University of Toronto, some of whom now may not be allowed to travel to the U.S. This will have an adverse effect on their professional activities, their careers, and their family relations. As noted in the [University of Toronto's response](#), all university communities value and depend on the free flow of people, and the free exchange of ideas that are fundamental to teaching and learning. This order stands in opposition to our professional values and principles, and to our mission as an institution of higher learning. Given the seriousness of this situation, we have individually registered our opposition with the professional associations to which we belong—the [Society for Cinema and Media Studies](#), the [Modern Language Association](#), and the [American Studies Association](#), among others— and joined them in condemning this ban. We salute those organizations that have offered accommodations to scholars who cannot travel to conferences or meetings scheduled in the United States, and will engage in discussion about moving future conferences and meetings to locations other than the United States

while this executive order is in effect.

We not only condemn this action; we also support our students and colleagues directly affected by this order, and will provide whatever practical assistance we can to offset its effects. As is the University of Toronto as a whole, the Cinema Studies Institute is actively reviewing the specific ways that this hostile policy affects our students and colleagues, and will take concrete actions to attempt to limit or eliminate those harms. As we make progress on that front, we will update this response.

In addition, we urge caution for students, faculty, and staff from the affected countries in making travel plans, and suggest that they make use of resources the university has provided to support them—see the [University of Toronto Safety Abroad website](#). As noted by the University in its statement: “Students travelling abroad with concerns should call the Safety Abroad Office directly 416-946-3929; in the case of an emergency, reach us at the 24-hour collect emergency line via Campus Police at 416-978-2222. International students on all three U of T campuses who have concerns or questions can reach staff at the Centre for International Experience at 416-978-2564 or email cie.information@utoronto.ca.” Faculty and staff are also encouraged to notify the University of their international travel plans and pursue caution when travelling to, or through, the United States.

Finally, we in the Cinema Studies Institute, as members of the larger University of Toronto community, will contribute to collective and individual efforts to resist and condemn this executive order, and in the process to affirm the principles of freedom of expression and communication, and of aid and comfort to those in need, that it chooses to soundly reject.

Further resources and statements of resistance and support:

[Statement from Universities Canada](#)

[Statement from the Association of American Universities](#)

[The Varsity: “U of T Students Among Those Impacted by US Travel Ban”](#)

[Message from Faculty of Law Dean Ed Iacobucci on recent events in the United States and Quebec](#)

[Statement from the Political Science Department](#)

[Statement from the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences](#)

[Statement from the Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians](#)