

Isis hails Donald Trump's Muslim immigration restrictions as a 'blessed ban'

Tuesday 31 January 2017, by [McKERNAN Bethan](#) (Date first published: 30 January 2017).

Extremist social media channels delighted with new US President's executive order, claiming it fulfils an al-Qaeda leader's prediction that the West would eventually turn against its Muslim citizens

Al Qaeda, Isis and other jihadi groups are thrilled with US President Donald Trump's executive order on immigration targeting Muslim countries, describing it as proof that the US is at war with Islam.

The new legislation signed by Mr Trump on Friday temporarily suspends the US' refugee programme and bans citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen) from entering the country on the grounds of national security.

Isis-friendly channels on the Telegram messaging service described the ban as "blessed", echoing how the US 2003 invasion of Iraq was called a "blessed invasion" for reinvigorating anti-US sentiment in the region.

One user greeted the news of the "Muslim ban" as "the best caller to Islam", hoping it will draw Muslim Americans to their cause.

Several posts suggested that the prediction of Anwar al-Awlaki – a US-born al Qaeda leader killed in Yemen in 2011 – that "the West would eventually turn against its Muslim citizens" was coming true.

Confusion reigned at border control over the weekend over whether green card holders and those with legal work or study visas should be sent back from the US or allowed to re-enter if currently overseas.

"[The ban] plays into this clash of civilisations idea, which is something that global jihadis need as fuel, to claim Americans are against them, that the West is against them," Dr Renad Mansour, a fellow from the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House, told *The Independent*. "Trump is seen to be validating what they already claimed was happening."

The new administration's decision to implement the restrictions was met with outrage internationally and sparked protests at major US airports, where lawyers and translators flocked to help those affected.

Although several parts of the order have already been struck down by federal judges, and more reviews are on the way, an unknown number of people holding valid visas were turned away from US-bound flights or detained upon arrival over the weekend.

Politicians and other officials have expressed concern that the hastily implemented legislation will fuel jihadi narratives and help inspire new recruits.

"The effect will probably in some areas give Isis some more propaganda," Republican Senator John McCain told CBS on Sunday.

Javad Zarif, the foreign minister of Iran, one of the countries affected, tweeted that the travel ban "will be recorded in history as a great gift to extremists and their supporters".

Bethan McKernan, Beirut
@mck_beth

P.S.

* The Independent Online. Monday 30 January 2017. :

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-donald-trump-muslim-ban-immigration-iraq-iran-restrictions-travel-islamic-state-us-visa-a7552856.html>