

## US travel ban a 'significant setback' for those needing international protection – UN rights experts

1 February 2017 – Expressing concern that a new Executive Order by the United States President Donald Trump is in breach of the country's human rights commitments, a group of United Nations rights experts have called on the US to live up to its human rights obligations and provide protection for those fleeing persecution and conflicts.

Such an order is clearly discriminatory based on one's nationality and leads to increased stigmatization of Muslim communities," said the UN Special Rapporteurs on migrant, François Crépeau; on racism, Mutuma Ruteere; on human rights and counter-terrorism, Ben Emmerson; on torture, Nils Melzer; and on freedom of religion, Ahmed Shaheed, in a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The US recent policy on immigration also risks people being returned, without proper individual assessments and asylum procedures, to places in which they risk being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, in direct contravention of international humanitarian and human rights laws which uphold the principle of non-refoulement," they warned.

The Executive Order, signed by President Trump on 27 January bars all nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries – Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen – from entering the US for the next 90 days.

It also stops the entire US refugee programme for 120 days, indefinitely bans Syrian refugees, and halts the planned entry of more than 50,000 refugees in the US fiscal year 2017, which began in October 2016 and will end in September 2017, according to the news release.

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Noting that "in the midst of the world's greatest migration crisis since World War II, this is a significant setback for those who are obviously in need of international protection," the rights experts stressed: "The US must live up to its international obligations and provide protection for those fleeing persecution and conflicts."

The US is also involved in conflicts such as those in Iraq and Syria and its responsibility must extend to offering refuge to those fleeing from the conflicts," they added.

According to the news release, the Executive Order also applies to those who come from the countries listed &#8211; whether or not they have valid visa documents or are in transit.

It also affects those who have dual nationality, who either have a passport from one of those countries or are travelling from one of those countries. Furthermore, those currently residing in the US may be able to fly to the US but entry is not guaranteed.

&#8220This is deeply troubling, and we are additionally concerned that such persons travelling to the US will be subject to detention for an undefined period of time and then ultimately deported,&#8221 the human rights experts said.

Independent experts and Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the Geneva based UN Human Rights Council &#8211; an inter-governmental body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world &#8211; to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

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## [With fewer people active, UN health agency urges people to get moving](#)

1 February 2017 – Not enough exercise contributes to cancer, diabetes, depression and other non-communicable diseases, according to the United Nations health agency, which is urging people to get up and get active.

According to a new document the World Health Organization (WHO), less and less people are active in many countries with nearly a quarter of all adults and more than 80 per cent of adolescents being too sedentary.

WHO's *Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020* recommends that inactive people start with &#8220small amounts of physical activity&#8221 and then gradually increase duration, frequency and intensity over time.

Physical activity can be any activity, not just sport, that uses energy &#8211; from playing and doing household chores to gardening and dancing.

&#8220Any activity, be it for work, to walk or cycle to and from places, or as part of leisure time, has a health benefit,&#8221 according to the UN agency.

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## UN agency creates tool box of new technologies, good practices to help keep food safe

1 February 2017 – From avian flu to locusts and E. coli bacteria, food is contaminated every day by diseases and pests, leading the United Nations agricultural agency to create a set of emergency prevention tools to save lives and improve food safety and security.

“We believe it’s important for sectors involved in food production, processing and marketing to watch out for current and potential threats and respond to them in a concerted manner,” said the Assistant Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ren Wang.

The UN agency, in the recently published *Averting risks to the food chain*, shows that preventing, early warning, preparedness, good food chain crisis management and good practices can help to stop the diseases and pests that ravage food chains.

One of the key messages from the report is that an integrated approach which covers all the stages from prevention to timely response is needed to curb food chain crises caused by transboundary animal diseases to plant pests and diseases.

Among the biggest pests that the FAO is focusing on is the desert locust, which affects more than 65 per cent of the world’s poorest countries and is considered the most dangerous of all migratory pest species in the world.

Able to consume its own weight in fresh food per day, a typical 1 km size swarm of locusts or roughly 40 million locusts can eat the same amount as 35,000 people, 20 camels or six elephants.

The FAO is using the eLocust3 system, which records and transmits data from crop pest monitoring in good time, to improve monitoring and prevention of locusts in 19 of the most vulnerable countries.

Meanwhile, in Mali, Uganda and Tanzania, livestock farmers are using the EMA – i app to collect animal disease information from the field on their smartphones. The data is sent in real-time to the Global Animal Disease Information System (EMPRES-i) at FAO, where it is shared at national, regional and global levels, facilitating analysis in a timely manner in order to provide a very rapid response to attack the disease at the very early stage of birth.

Another tool in the FAO report is sharing information through regional veterinary lab networks in Africa and Asia. There are 32 labs in African countries and 17 in Asian countries. By working more closely together, scientists can trace the outbreak and prevent it from infecting animals in other countries in the region.

Given that a third of global crop production is lost annually due to insects and plant diseases that can spread to multiple countries and through continents, by sharing information, experts can develop standardized protocols and train response workers regionally, as well as have international standards for any tests.

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## [Fujian orders paid leave to care for elders](#)

Adults in Fujian province who are the product of single-child families will be guaranteed paid leave of up to 10 days annually if they need to care for older parents who are hospitalized, according to legislation passed by the province's top legislature.

The measure was passed on Jan 22 and is set to go into effect on March 1. It is intended to protect residents at age 60 or above, but some experts and members of the public say they are doubtful it will work in the private sector.

It says that wages and benefits for those without siblings who take time off for the specified purpose should continue to be paid.

Employers who refuse to continue paying wages and benefits will be punished, said Xu Hua, vice-chairwoman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Fujian Provincial People's Congress Standing Committee.

If employers still refuse to pay past a deadline, the Department of Human Resources and Social Security will levy fines ranging from 2,000 to 20,000 yuan (\$290 to \$2,900) in accordance with Regulations on Supervision of Labor Security, Xu said. They also will be listed as "promise breakers" and will be restricted in bidding, market access and obtaining financing, she said.

There were 5.15 million seniors aged 60 and above in Fujian by the end of 2015, representing 13.4 percent of the province's population. For the whole country, the number was 222 million, or more than 16 percent of the population.

Fujian's new measure follows a national law passed in 1996 by the country's top legislative body on the "protection of the rights and interests of the elderly". The law was amended twice in 2012 and 2015. According to the latest

amendment, seniors have the right to obtain material assistance from the State. It also says families are required to care for them.

The Fujian regulation builds upon the national law by adding more detailed provisions, said Gan Mantang, a sociology professor at Fuzhou University.

But while calling paid leave “innovative”, he said it will be difficult to put into practice.

“Workers are not even paid now for some normal vacations. It remains doubtful that this paid leave will be carried out.”

He said it probably can be put into practice in State-owned institutions, but it may not be so easy in private companies, he added.

Han Yongjing, an assistant to a real estate company’s chief financial officer in Fuzhou, Fujian’s provincial capital, said public servants may benefit from the policy but doubts the same will apply in the private sector.

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## [Netizens debate fatal zoo mauling](#)

A tiger that was shot to death after fatally injuring a man who had sneaked into its enclosure on Sunday in Ningbo has drawn sympathy from Chinese netizens, many of whom also expressed condolences for the family of the dead man.

There also were disagreements on who should be blamed – and often it wasn’t the tiger.

The man who died, surnamed Zhang, was reported to have climbed the walls at Youngor Zoo to avoid paying the 130 yuan (\$18.90) entrance fee, but landed in the tiger enclosure, according to the Ningbo Dongqian Lake Tourist Resort Administrative Committee.

Zhang was cornered by three tigers. One clenched its jaws around his neck and head, refusing to retreat even when zookeepers lit firecrackers.

The mauling happened in front of the middle-aged man’s wife and two children.

“The tiger was killed trying to catch the guy who avoided paying the zoo ticket. I feel bad for the zoo, the tiger and the guy’s family,” Chen Ou, CEO of Jumei, an online beauty products retailer, said on his Weibo account.

“Save it, people. This is Spring Festival. Death is death, no matter how hard you curse,” said one user on Weibo. “The tiger can never be revived.” While it appeared he was referring to the dead man, his last comment made clear that wasn’t necessarily the case.

The comment received thousands of “likes”.

Still, one of Zhang’s relatives, surnamed Yang, said, “Even if he (Zhang) climbed over the walls to get in, it was the zoo’s mismanagement.”

In July, tigers in a drive-through wildlife park in Beijing mauled a woman and killed her elderly mother, who tried to save her. The woman, who broke the rules by leaving the car, sued the park.

In May, a 3-year-old boy fell into the gorilla enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo in the US. A 200-kilogram male gorilla named Harambe was shot to death while dragging the child away. There was a debate over whether Harambe was trying to harm the boy or protect him.