

DECEMBER 5, 2017

# NO MUSLIM BAN EVER

HOW TO BE A  
PROGRESSIVE ALLY

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# Purpose

This guidebook is here to help progressive organizations, leaders, members of Congress, and other allies speak out against the Muslim Ban to their progressive constituents and members with messaging that

- 1) **effectively** pushes back against the Muslim Ban,
- 2) provides clear **do's and don'ts** to avoid anti-Muslim framing, and
- 3) **does not harm Muslim communities.**

Dear reader,

As you know, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in this country predate the rise of Donald Trump. However, the Trump administration's official sanctioning of blatant Islamophobic and anti-Muslim speech and policies has led to a drastic increase in individual hate crimes and terrifying displays of mob violence.

At the same time, the election of Trump has forced a significant shift in the way progressive activists, elected officials, organizations, and other allies approach and interact with Muslim communities. The outpouring of support from diverse communities at airports across the country after Trump's initial Muslim Ban was a visual representation of that shift. It was a mass national action—where people came out in the thousands—to specifically stand in solidarity with Muslim communities.

And yet, in standing against the Muslim Ban, some progressive allies have at times continued to perpetuate Republican and anti-Muslim messaging and rhetorical frameworks that are not only unhelpful but are actively harmful to Muslim communities. That's why, as part of its work to uproot Islamophobia, MoveOn created an ally guide meant to help address and transform this reality—providing clear, positive talking points and narrative framing, as well as pitfalls to avoid when speaking about the Muslim Ban. Many of these recommendations can be applied more broadly to speaking or writing about issues relating to Muslim communities.

The time is now for creating our own language, and this guidebook is an attempt to take that step forward. We simply can't fight fear and hate with language that reinforces fear and hate, but we can make progress by being intentional in our language as well as our policies. Our hope is that you find the guidebook helpful and join us on this next step of a very long journey to uproot Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry from within progressive circles as well as American politics.

Sincere thanks to national allies, including those from the following organizations, who took the time to offer feedback which made this guide stronger: MPower Change, the National Iranian American Council, ReThink Media, Muslim Advocates, and the ACLU, among others. Any errors in the guide are my own.

We welcome your questions and feedback. Please reach out directly to me at [iram@moveon.org](mailto:iram@moveon.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Iram Ali". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "I" and "A".

Iram Ali  
Author  
Campaign Director, MoveOn.org

# In Your Messaging, Do ...

- **Do emphasize Trump’s original intent** for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims from entering the country” that remains immoral and discriminatory, regardless of superficial changes to future versions of the ban.<sup>1</sup>

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- Donald Trump has made it explicitly clear that he wants a Muslim Ban, making this policy discriminatory. This hasn’t changed since Muslim Ban 1.0.
- Despite new changes to the ban, Trump’s original intent remains the same: he wants to ban Muslims from entering the country. It remains discriminatory and immoral.
- The intent, target, and most-impacted communities of every version of the ban remain the same: Muslims. This is unacceptable.

- **Do mention that cosmetic changes to the Muslim Ban don’t change its impact or intent.** Despite the addition of North Korea and Venezuela to Muslim Ban 3.0, **over 98% of immigrants who may be impacted by the ban will be from the six majority-Muslim countries.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- The addition of North Korea and Venezuela to Muslim Ban 3.0 doesn’t change the intent of the Muslim Ban. The ban will still disproportionately impact immigrants from the six targeted majority-Muslim countries.
- Over 98% of immigrants who may be impacted by the ban will be from the six majority-Muslim countries: Yemen, Syria, Iran, Somalia, Chad, and Libya.

- **Do talk about values that people hold dear. We should be building a nation based on dignity, fairness, and respect.** The Muslim Ban pushes us further away from that goal.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- We should be building a nation of dignity, fairness, and respect. The Muslim Ban pushes us further away from that goal.
- Our goals as progressives should be supporting equity for all people and protecting multicultural societies where everyone can thrive. A ban against people for the way they practice their faith or the way they pray isn’t acceptable for the future we want to build. The Muslim Ban has no place in our society—not now, not ever.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/12/07/donald-trump-calls-for-banning-muslims-from-entering-u-s/>

- **Do mention the Supreme Court isn't infallible—it can and has made mistakes.** Although it did not rule on the legality of the Muslim Ban, issuing a stay on December 5, 2017 to allow Trump's Muslim ban 3.0 to be implemented is a grave mistake that will be looked down upon in history books.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- The Supreme Court can and has made mistakes. For example, the Supreme Court never ruled that Executive Order 9066, which authorized internment camps to hold Japanese Americans during WWII, was unconstitutional. Allowing Trump's Muslim Ban 3.0 to be implemented as we await the constitutionality is equally an immoral act that will break apart families.

- **Do mention the unified response of communities who continue to rise up against the Muslim Ban—from airports<sup>2</sup> to marches, the public is clear where it stands.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- When the initial Muslim Ban was implemented, we saw an outpouring of diverse communities who came together at airports across the country, chanting, "Let Muslims in" and "No Muslim Ban." The show of solidarity was clear: the Muslim Ban has no place in our society.
- When the first Muslim Ban was implemented, people clearly saw their values under attack and people being blocked from entering the country. They didn't wait, and diverse communities acted immediately. They showed up at airports, they printed posters, and they signed petitions by the hundreds of thousands to say they stand against this immoral policy.

- **Do emphasize that the ban is discriminatory and that Trump continues to enact racist and discriminatory policies.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- The Muslim Ban is a prime example of Trump's discriminatory policies. His harmful policies against people who are immigrants and/or Muslims are a clear part of his agenda, as he has stated time and again.

- **Do mention that the ban, including the most recent version, is illegal<sup>3</sup> and countless courts have already ruled various versions as being unconstitutional.<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/01/29/immigration-ban-protest-airports-orig-vstan-dlewis.cnn>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/opinion/trumps-immigration-ban-is-illegal.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/news/federal-appeals-court-rules-trump-muslim-ban-unconstitutional>

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- Countless courts have now blocked the ban from being implemented in its first, second, and third iterations. As the 4th Circuit said about one version of the ban, it “drips with religious intolerance, animus, and discrimination.”<sup>5</sup>
  - The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 made banning immigrants on the basis of nationality illegal.
- **Do speak about the humanitarian crises in Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Somalia, which make the ban cruel, heartless, and immoral.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is considered to be the “worst humanitarian crisis since World War II.”<sup>6</sup> The banning of Yemeni immigrants and visitors is a cruel and unnecessary decision that is directly putting people in harm’s way.
  - The people being banned from entering the country are also suffering from humanitarian crises of unseen proportions. The people of Yemen, Syria, and Somalia should not be paying for the harms being inflicted on them by government and non-government actors.
  - Discriminating against people or closing our doors on those seeking refuge or in need is not what we stand for.
- **Do mention that there has been an increase in hate crimes against Muslims following Trump’s Muslim Ban proposal. Anti-Muslim speech and policies are leading to violence against Muslim houses of worship and against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslims.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- There was an estimated 87.5% increase in hate crimes against people who are Muslim in the days following Trump’s Muslim Ban proposal.<sup>7</sup>
- Trump’s policies, such as the Muslim Ban, are leading to increased hate crimes against our Muslim neighbors. This is unacceptable.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/muslim-ban-drips-religious-intolerance-animus-and-discrimination-rules>

<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/no-one-is-paying-attention-to-the-worst-humanitarian-crisis-since-world-war-ii/2017/06/25/70d055f8-5767-11e7-ba90-f5875b7d1876\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/no-one-is-paying-attention-to-the-worst-humanitarian-crisis-since-world-war-ii/2017/06/25/70d055f8-5767-11e7-ba90-f5875b7d1876_story.html)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/hate-crimes-muslims-since-911\\_us\\_57e00644e4b04a1497b59970](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/hate-crimes-muslims-since-911_us_57e00644e4b04a1497b59970)

# In Your Messaging, Don't ...

- **Don't mention how the Muslim Ban makes the country "less safe."** Research already shows that this talking point does *not* work on persuadable audiences.

ACTUAL BAD EXAMPLE:

"And we must rally Americans who think that keeping Muslims out keeps us safe to understand that this policy does exactly the opposite."

REASONING (from research on immigration policy<sup>8</sup>):

"In particular, **the tendency to talk about how these new policies make us unsafe or less safe call (sic) to mind the very concerns that leave persuadable audiences unsure about the right course of action.**

"Reporting on various strains of research, *The Washington Post's* David Ignatius concludes, 'Trump's campaign pushes buttons that social scientists understand. When the GOP nominee paints a dark picture of a violent, frightening America, he triggers the "fight-or-flight" response that's hardwired in our brains. For the body politic, it can produce a kind of panic attack.'"

- **Don't mention "national security"**—including, but not limited to, mentioning ISIS or any other violent group. This goes back to the previous point: any mention of fear will only reproduce the "fight-or-flight" response and will not work to persuade audiences. Additionally, this response paints the image of Muslims as predisposed or teetering on the edge of becoming "terrorists," which is both untrue *and* perpetuates a stereotype that contributes to bigotry and hate.

ACTUAL BAD EXAMPLE:

"Just like the first and second versions of the Muslim ban, this one is still illegal, discriminatory, and harmful to our nation's security. This ban plays right into the hands of ISIS and terrorist organizations around the world."

- **Don't mention which countries should be banned or make more sense to ban than the already-banned countries.**

ACTUAL BAD EXAMPLES:

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<sup>8</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9YEF\\_d2MnV1Nm9KT1NiVzJEczQ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9YEF_d2MnV1Nm9KT1NiVzJEczQ/view)



“Donald Trump’s new ‘Muslim ban’ still does not include countries that have produced terrorists.”

“For example, Tashfeen Malik, the San Bernardino shooter, was from Saudi Arabia/Pakistan. Neither one of those two countries is on the Trump administration list of restricted countries.”

REASONING:

Mentioning countries that are not being banned will reinforce the notion that more countries should be added to the ban—and that a ban on those countries would make sense. Adding other countries to the ban is holding their citizens responsible for the actions of a few and would be equally discriminatory and illegal.

# In Your Messaging, You Could Also ...

- **You could** mention that **the ban reinforces white supremacy.**

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- The Trump administration is consistently enacting white supremacist policies—from revoking DACA to the Muslim Ban, the precedent is clear. Like other immigration policies, the Muslim Ban is a fascist policy that seeks to make it impossible for Muslims to enter, remain, and prosper in the United States. We should be building a nation of fairness. The Muslim Ban pushes us further away from that goal.
- **You could emphasize the hand of U.S. covert and overt military operations or sanctions** in leaving many of the countries destabilized and in their current conditions, with the ban leaving no recourse for escape by those impacted by our own detrimental policies.

## SOME EXAMPLES:

- **Yemen:** Though a war has never been authorized by Congress, there have been approximately 258 confirmed U.S. drone strikes in Yemen.<sup>9</sup> Since 2008, the U.S. also sold \$110 billion worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia during the Obama administration, and Congress recently approved a deal worth \$350 billion over 10 years.<sup>10,11</sup> Saudi Arabia is currently leading a coalition that is blockading and bombing Yemen, causing a massive humanitarian crisis.
- **Somalia:** The U.S. has been carrying out covert operations in Somalia since 2001 that have led to at least 584 people killed.<sup>12</sup>
- **Libya:** In 2016 alone, the U.S. launched 496 bombs on Libyan territory.<sup>13</sup>
- **Iran:** A democratically elected prime minister was ousted by a CIA-led coup coordinated with British intelligence in 1953. In 1995, the US imposed a near-total economic embargo on Iran that remains in place to this day.<sup>14</sup>

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[https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/projects/drone-war/charts?show\\_casualties=1&show\\_injuries=1&show\\_strikes=1&location=yemen&from=2002-1-1&to=now](https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/projects/drone-war/charts?show_casualties=1&show_injuries=1&show_strikes=1&location=yemen&from=2002-1-1&to=now)

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/09/21/saudi-arabia-is-facing-unprecedented-scrutiny-from-congress/>

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<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/20/us-saudi-arabia-seal-weapons-deal-worth-nearly-110-billion-as-trump-begins-visit.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/drone-war/data/somalia-reported-us-covert-actions-2001-2017>

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<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-president-barack-obama-bomb-map-drone-wars-strikes-20000-pakistan-middle-east-afghanistan-a7534851.html>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html#/#time5\\_82](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html#/#time5_82)

- **You could** speak about Muslims who are your constituents or members—including their resilience during these times.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- Despite the Muslim Ban and hateful anti-Muslim speech, Muslims are showing that they're not going anywhere—including by remaining committed to humanitarian and racial justice work. As an incredibly diverse faith community, Muslims in the United States remain the most likely faith group to support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.
- Muslim communities continue to be actively committed to humanitarian work and racial justice.
  - Muslims are the most likely faith group (66%) to support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.
  - Muslims volunteer at equal numbers as members of other faith communities (44%).
  - Instead of hiding, Muslim women responded to a Trump win with greater giving. Nearly 30% of Muslim women and 19% of Muslim men have increased their donations to an organization associated with their faith community.<sup>15</sup>

- **You could** mention that the Muslim Ban is a continuation of bigoted anti-Muslim policies and **the fight against anti-Muslim bigotry doesn't stop at *only* blocking Trump's Muslim Ban.**

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- Trump's Muslim Ban is one example of countless anti-Muslim policies that have been heightened in the past decade by both Republicans and Democrats alike: Guantanamo Bay is still open, our wars and drone strikes are targeting multiple majority-Muslim nations, state surveillance of Muslim communities in the United States continues, and more. As we fight the Muslim Ban, we must ensure that other U.S. policies detrimentally impacting people who are Muslim are also taken down.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ispu.org/public-policy/american-muslim-poll/>

# Appendix

Terms to use and those to avoid:

<b>Use</b>	<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Muslim Ban	Travel ban	It's important to be consistent in the way we speak about the intent of this policy. It's a Muslim Ban through and through.
People who are Muslim Muslims Muslims in the U.S.	American Muslims Muslim Americans	The terms "American Muslim" or "Muslim American" are exclusionary to the diversity of Muslim experiences in the United States. There are undocumented Muslims, immigrant Muslims, dual-national Muslims, those descended from slave ancestors, those who are indigenous, and many overlapping identities in between. We don't want to set ourselves in a bind where we are advocating only for a particular group of Muslims in the United States and excluding many, many other Muslims who are also a part of our communities.
Muslim communities	Muslim community	Muslims are one of the most diverse faith groups in the United States in terms of race and national origin. This means Muslim communities are not a monolith—there is no one "Muslim community" we can point to that is representative of all Muslims in the United States.