

CVT Applauds President Biden's Executive Actions

ST. PAUL, Minn. and WASHINGTON — The Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today issued this statement after President Biden took executive actions that will begin to dismantle cruel and discriminatory policies established under the Trump administration, and to chart a new course.

“President Biden’s day one executive actions are a much welcome, sweeping rejection not only of some of Donald Trump’s abhorrent policies, but also of the discriminatory and cruel ideologies they reflect. So much of what the president did last night is important to CVT, our clients and their communities – from rescinding the Muslim and related bans and stopping construction of Trump’s southern border wall, to a commitment to pursuing a comprehensive government approach to advancing equity for all and combatting systemic racism, to fighting sex and gender discrimination, to the U.S. rejoining the World Health Organization. Of course, there is an enormous amount of additional work to be done to undo the damage Trump wrought, and, as President Biden and Vice President Harris have pledged, to build back better. But this is an encouraging start.” -Curt Goering, executive director

Here are brief summaries of some of the actions:

Proclamation Ending the Muslim and African Ban: Rescinds the ban imposing restrictions that prevented individuals from predominantly Muslim and African countries from entering the United States.

Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities: Recognizing the entrenched disparities in our laws and public policy, this Executive Order directs the Federal Government to pursue a “comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.”

Letter Announcing Commitment to Remain a Member of the World Health Organization (WHO): The administration sent a letter to António Guterres, Secretary General from the United Nations, informing him that the United States intends to remain a member of the WHO, and recognized the crucial role the organization plays against COVID-19.

Termination of Emergency that Triggered the Redirection of Funds to Build the Border Wall: Terminates the national emergency issued in Proclamation 9844 on February 15, 2019 that diverted tax-payer funds toward border wall construction.

Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation: States that everyone should receive equal treatment under the law and that “every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are or whom they love.” It directs the heads of each agency to “review all existing orders, regulations, guidance documents, policies, programs, and other agency actions...” to assess whether they comply with this mandate.

Suspension of New Enrollments into the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP): The Department of Homeland Security issued a statement announcing the suspension of the enrollment of additional individuals into MPP, a policy that has sent thousands of asylum

seekers back to dangerous Mexican border cities to wait while their cases are being adjudicated.

Reinstatement of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Liberians: The Administration will grant DED to Liberian nationals who had been previously granted DED as of January 10, 2021. This means these Liberians will have access to work authorization through June 30, 2022 while they apply for other types of more permanent immigration relief.

Executive Order to Preserve Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): Directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to “take all actions he deems appropriate . . . to preserve and fortify DACA.” This program protects undocumented individuals who were brought to the United States when they were children from deportation, and allows them to work lawfully.

Apportionment Pursuant to the Decennial Census: Prevents former President Trump’s attempt to exclude individuals without lawful immigration status from the 2020 Census.

Memorandum Directing a 100-Day Pause on Deportations: Mandates a 100-day stop of certain removals starting on January 22, 2021, to allow the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to focus its resources where they are most needed. It also requires DHS to review all enforcement practices within 100 days.

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The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Paul, MN, with offices in Atlanta, GA, and Washington, D.C.; and healing initiatives in Africa and the Middle East. Visit www.cvt.org.