

Open Letter

February 3, 2017

**The Honorable Donald J Trump
President**

The White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus, the Executive Committee writes to express concerns regarding two issues, namely the ban on settling refugees, and the singling out of seven countries in the Middle East & North Africa regions (MENA).

As Christians (Presbyterians), the Bible that grounds our commitment teaches us “faith, hope, and love abide, and the greatest of these is love” (*1 Corinthians 13:13*). We urge you to reconsider the above-mentioned Executive Order, for we see Christ in the stranger and we welcome Jesus in all refugees: “*For I [Jesus] was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.*” (*Matthew 25:35, 36*). While we support the role of the government in security, we respectfully disagree with your approach to scapegoating refugees, students, businesspeople, tourists, and new immigrants. The Bible reminds us that Jesus and the Holy Family were once refugees, as were many of the patriarchs and matriarchs. As people of faith, we are admonished to heed how we treat the alien and the stranger in our midst: “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers*” (*Hebrews 13:2*).

We note that the ban on legally vetted refugees, students, business people, and visitors because of ethnic, national origin, and religious affiliation is a stark reminder of oppression and discrimination of past evils the U.S. must pledge never to repeat. For we as a nation have inflicted enough death and destruction and visited enough evils on native tribes and African peoples as well as many other migrant populations. Both the Christian faith and the constitution of the United States of America prevent us from singling out nations such as the ones banned by your directives, as we see in such a demonizing and dehumanizing the “other” based on fear and unfounded threat of terror.

Mr. President, as citizens of this nation we believe it is un-American to wage offensive and unprovoked wars, and to inflict destruction, poverty, and suffering on innocent populations. We urge you to reconsider the policies of the United States, in particular regarding the Middle East and North African (MENA), and to help lead this nation and the world to a better just and peaceful future.

Sincerely,

Rev. Raafat Zaki
Moderator