



**INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
RC 22 SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION**

**STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO U.S. RESTRICTIONS ON VISAS AND
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

January 31, 2017

The Board of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee on the Sociology of Religion expresses its opposition to the restrictions on international travel, visas, and immigration that have been imposed by the President of the United States and his administration. We join with many other scholarly associations to protest this restriction on the free movement of people and ideas across national borders. As scholars of religion, we particularly protest the unjust singling out of Muslims and the residents of Muslim majority countries.

As sociologists, we oppose this Executive Order because it affects our colleagues and students as well as the conditions for knowledge production. In addition, sociologists have documented and analyzed the ways in which symbolic boundaries are made more rigid and result in the social exclusion of specific groups. This Executive Order targeting specific groups of individuals has effects not only on its immediate victims, but also on how our society understands itself and its orientation toward diversity and human rights.

We are an international scholarly organization with members from all over the world. Some of our members come from the targeted Muslim countries. Others come from the 38 countries that are affected by the suspension of the Visa Interview Waiver Program – including members of the European Union. Banning or hindering their travel threatens to prevent them from attending our conferences and participating in our workshops and other intellectual exchanges. Retaliatory travel banning by the affected countries will isolate U.S. scholars as well, weakening their contribution to our society.

As scholars, we know the importance of maintaining the free flow of information and persons across national borders. Shared knowledge helps the public understand society's workings. It reduces international tensions. It reduces prejudice. It creates stronger social institutions. And it increases international prosperity. The Executive Order does not increase safety; it increases discord and indeed endangers people around the world. We call on the American government to reverse the order immediately and restore the free flow of people and ideas between the U.S. and other countries.

On behalf of the Research Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James V. Spickard', written in a cursive style.

James V. Spickard, PhD, President
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