Department of Political Science  
University of Toronto  
Statement on US Executive Order on Immigration  
January 29, 2017

The United States Government has issued an executive order on immigration indefinitely banning Syrian refugees from entering the United States, suspending all refugee admissions for 120 days, and blocking the entry of citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries, refugees or otherwise. This order has been contested legally in the United States and its ongoing status and enforcement are in flux.

The Faculty of the Department of Political Science of the University of Toronto categorically condemn this executive order. It is an affront to human rights and simply indecent to impose such policy on any country’s citizens, especially the most vulnerable. Furthermore, this order will increase international instability, emboldening those forces seeking to create division, fear and hatred.

While we would not normally comment on executive action being taken by the government of the United States, this action also affects students, staff, and faculty at the University of Toronto who now may not be allowed to travel to the US, affecting their professional activities and family relationships. More generally as noted in the University of Toronto’s response, university communities value and depend on the free flow of people and the ideas and teaching and learning that they bring. This action thus offends the deepest professional values, mission, identity we hold as members of an institution of higher learning. In this light, we also call on the members of professional associations, including but not limited to, the Canadian Political Science Association, the International Studies Association, and the American Political Science Association, to condemn this ban. We would hope that political science associations with conferences or meetings scheduled in the United States will consider moving locations, or at the very least, creating participatory opportunities for those who cannot, or do not want to, travel to the United States while this executive order is in effect.

We not only condemn this action, but affirm to our students and colleagues support should they be directly affected by this order. Our community is actively reviewing the specific ways that this hostile policy affects our students and colleagues, and commits to taking concrete actions to attempt to neutralize those harms. As we make progress on that front, we will update this response.
In the meantime, we urge caution for students, faculty, and staff from the affected countries in making travel plans—see the University of Toronto Safety Abroad website. As noted by the University in its statement: “Students travelling abroad with concerns should call the Safety Abroad Office directly 416-946-3929; in the case of an emergency, reach us at the 24-hour collect emergency line via Campus Police at 416-978-2222. International students on all three U of T campuses who have concerns or questions can reach staff at the Centre for International Experience at 416-978-2564 or email cie.information@utoronto.ca.” Faculty and staff are also encouraged to notify the University of their international travel plans and pursue caution when travelling to, or through, the United States.