



# The American Society of Pharmacognosy

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Discovering  
Nature's  
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Potential

## ASP Responds to Trump Administration Travel Bans

By Dr. Edward J. Kennelly

In early February, ASP President Dr. Cindy Angerhofer posted a statement on the ASP website ([www.pharmacognosy.us/statement-from-the-asp-president/](http://www.pharmacognosy.us/statement-from-the-asp-president/)) that expressed concerns about the first executive order of US President Donald Trump, signed on January 27, 2017, banning entry of citizens from seven predominately Muslim countries. While that order has been challenged in the federal court system, a new executive order was signed by President Trump on March 6, 2017, restricting immigration and travel from six of the seven countries in the original order unless the travelers already have valid travel documents.

The new executive order appears to be somewhat narrower in scope than the original order. Six nations, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, and Libya are still included, but Iraq has been removed. Green card holders from those six nations are now exempt, as are other people from these countries with valid US visas. A temporary restraining order was issued by US District Judge Derrick Watson on March 15, 2017, preventing this new ban from being enforced.

President Angerhofer wrote to ASP members about the first executive order



Demonstrators protesting the travel ban in Oakland California.

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and referenced a January 31 letter, co-signed by more than 150 other scientific organizations. She stated, "The American Society of Pharmacognosy stands in solidarity with the...scientific organizations who have signed a letter to President Donald Trump urging him to rescind his Executive Order of January 27 restricting immigration and visas. The letter well represents the detrimental impact of this

action on the global scientific community, individual scientists and students from countries that have been singled out, and the very future of scientific leadership by the United States. ASP joins these scientific societies in voicing strong objection to this Executive Order and offering the administration assistance in creating an effective immigration and visa policy that

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stays true to American principles as a nation of immigrants.” Dr. Angerhofer told the *ASP Newsletter* that the second ban did not appear to be substantially different from the original in terms of its effect on the scientific community.

In the past decade, ASP has had 8 members from Iran and one from Sudan, according to the Society’s MemberClicks da-

One of the largest concentrations of international pharmacognosy researchers in the US is at the National Center for Natural Products Research (NCNPR) at the University Mississippi School of Pharmacy, University, Mississippi. According to NCNPR Director and ASP member Dr. Ikhlas Khan, “When it comes to natural products and the traditional knowledge accumulated from their use,

**“Knowledge has no boundaries and the exchange of thoughts and collaborations are the key for future meaningful developments of the natural products industry in US.”**

— Dr. Khan

tabase. There have been two ASP members from Iraq. It is not possible to tell how many ASP members are from one of these six countries but reside somewhere else.

The *ASP Newsletter* made a concerted effort to contact all 10 identifiable members from the six potentially banned nations by e-mail and social media in an attempt to learn how this policy change is impacting pharmacognosy researchers abroad. Only a few responded to the *ASP Newsletter* inquiries, and those that did asked for anonymity.

One Iranian ASP member who resides in the US wrote about the newly issued executive order, “It will have a negative impact on any scientific exchange as it will make it impossible for scientists in Iran to travel to the US, either to take part in a conference or symposium or to do research in an American laboratory as a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow.” This ASP member also worried that the Iranian government may take some reciprocal actions that would make scientific exchange and dialogue almost impossible between the two nations.

Another ASP member based in one of the six banned countries stated how much he appreciated the outreach from the Society, and was heartened to know that ASP President Angerhofer has commented on this situation. This person also felt that the US government may not recognize that many scientists in these six nations feel like victims of their own governments, and some have severe limitations with regards to human rights at home. This ASP member noted that science is a way for him to remain focused in such a challenging political environment, and the inability to attend conferences in the US has a negative impact on his career.

we look to the Far East. These Eastern traditions and knowledge are the genesis of the natural products industry here in the US as well as the Western Hemisphere. Knowledge has no boundaries and the exchange of thoughts and collaborations are the key for future meaningful developments of the natural products industry in US. The proposed travel ban will almost certainly hinder the open exchange of scientists that ultimately will erode the possibility of building strong collaborative, international research efforts. Even though only six countries are currently affected by this ban, it will have broad implications throughout the scientific community. In addition to immediate hurdles, the long-term implications for developing countries as well as the future of young scientists in the area of natural products research are unpredictable.”

Another ASP member (and Fellow) with extensive experience working with international scientists is Dr. Gordon Cragg, who worked for the National Institutes of Health National Cancer Institute for many years. He commented about the executive order saying, “The United States has benefited from the knowledge and talents of countless immigrants irrespective of their cultures, faiths or countries of origin. The indiscriminate banning of immigrants and refugees from selected countries based on the predominance of particular faiths or cultures reflects very poorly on the moral judgement of the leadership of our country and is an affront to many immigrants of all persuasions!”

The US Code § 1182 - Inadmissible aliens, a 65 year-old provision of the Federal Immigration and Nationalities Act, gives presidents very broad authority. “.....Whenever the President

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— Dr. Cragg

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finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or

very early due to the problems involved with visitors from certain countries.”

ASP member Dr. David Kroll has written on the subject of how the travel ban could impact scientific research. In his December 8, 2015, *Forbes Magazine* article (reposted on the ASP Facebook page,

researchers. He suggests some specific areas that can effect changes: “... keep appealing to our representatives that the ban’s effect may be detrimental to research progress and international collaboration. I’d also suggest that ASP members who feel compelled to do so

**“It’s unlikely that I would have been hired into my first independent, tenure-track faculty position at age 28 without the creativity and work ethic of my Muslim lab mates while at the University of Colorado in the early 1990s.”**

— Dr. David Kroll

nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate...” ASP member and Fellow Dr. David Newman, who worked for the US government for a number of years, told the *Newsletter* that, “since the passage the original legislation 65 years ago, the following Presidents have activated it under EOs.” He then provided an extensive list of examples, from President Jimmy Carter’s ban of visas to Iranian citizens after the US hostage crisis in that country to Present Barack Obama who banned visas to people “who participate in serious human rights and humanitarian law violations and other abuses.”

Dr. Newman noted that over the years he has observed, “...that scientists from a number of countries, particularly from Africa and the Near/Middle East, have had problems obtaining visas to enter the US and other nations, including Australia, in order to attend scientific meetings. When I was at NCI, at times I had to intercede with the US State Department, in order to ‘facilitate the entry of scientists from those areas’ to attend both meetings, and training in specific taxonomic processes in the US, that were being paid for by the US government, so visa problems are common, not unusual. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, ASP has mentioned in the past that scientists wishing to present at ASP meetings should start their visa process

reaching 38,803 people, and “liked” by 6,300 people as of March 7, 2017) he discussed how important Muslim scientists have been to his research career, writing, “It’s unlikely that I would have been hired into my first independent, tenure-track faculty position at age 28 without the creativity and work ethic of my Muslim lab mates while at the University of Colorado in the early 1990s.” The long-term repercussions of this travel ban on scientists from these six nations and the US alike are likely to be profound.

Dr. Kroll encourages his fellow ASP members to remain engaged in these political issues that can deeply impact

write op-ed articles for their local or regional newspaper. Even for state employees, it’s nonpartisan to write such articles if one appeals to the simple economic impact of the bans ...on one’s locality.” Any ASP member wishing to voice their reaction to the executive order should be mindful of the policies at their place of employment, and the best course of action may be to write as a private citizen using a home address, rather than referencing their employer in any way. Specifically, any government employee has to be careful not to mix what could be considered a political comment with their employer’s address. ■

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