

Statement Opposing Bans against the People of Seven Nations Entering the US

The Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP) oppose the unprecedented actions to ban the entry of people from seven nations with Muslim majority populations that have valid visas or other appropriate immigration documents, and oppose the plans to differentially apply the restrictions with Muslim citizens but not with Christian citizens from the same nations.

Native American people have great sensitivity to any policy that encourages religious discrimination. Native Americans were not provided with religious freedom in the U.S. until passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. For over a century, our religious practices, like all other aspects of our cultures, were targeted during assimilation efforts by the federal government, with Native American people banned from engaging in their traditional religious practices, and often severely punished when they were caught engaging in those practices. The Massacre at Wounded Knee is one of countless examples of how fearmongering by federal authorities and their soldiers contributed to justification to attack and annihilate innocent people who were clearly not a threat. We have seen the mental and physical health consequences of discriminatory practices such as these that are meant to destroy people and their cultures. Extensive research has been conducted on how these clearly discriminatory practices harm the psychological well-being of people. Federal authorities engaged in fearmongering related to the religious practices among Native Americans in the same way we see fearmongering being used to discriminate and disempower Muslim Americans and Muslim visitors today. Fearmongering towards this group is only a pretext to actively discriminate against Muslim people. We have seen this pattern before, along with the requisite excuses and smokescreens by the federal government to excuse or cover over incomprehensible violations of people and their cultures.

The Society of Indian Psychologists opposes all policies that discriminate against people's spiritual and cultural practices and faith. We stand together in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers who are being targeted because of their religious beliefs and practices.