

This is not Muslim ban, media reporting it false: Donald Trump

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Washington: Defending his controversial executive order on banning people from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering America, US President Donald Trump has insisted that it is "not a Muslim ban" as is "falsely" reported by the media.

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Trump signed the order on Friday which bans Syrian refugees and people from six other countries from entering the US. The move has triggered widespread outrage.

The seven countries mentioned are Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Somalia.

Â Â Â "To be clear, this is not a Muslim ban, as the media is falsely reporting. This is not about religion - this is about terror and keeping our country safe. There are over 40 different countries worldwide that are majority Muslim that are not affected by this order," Trump said.

Trump said his administration will again be issuing visas to all countries once the US is sure that it has reviewed and implemented the most secure policies over the next 90 days.

"I have tremendous feeling for the people involved in this horrific humanitarian crisis in Syria. My first priority will always be to protect and serve our country, but as President I will find ways to help all those who are suffering," he said in a statement.

Noting that America is a proud nation of immigrants, Trump said the country will continue to show compassion to those fleeing oppression, but will do so while protecting its own citizens and border.

America has always been the land of the free and home of the brave, he said.

"We will keep it free and keep it safe, as the media knows, but refuses to say," Trump said, adding that his policy is similar to that of his predecessor Barack Obama who in 2011 banned visas for refugees from Iraq for six months.

"The seven countries named in the Executive Order are the same countries previously identified by the Obama administration as sources of terror," Trump said.

In series of tweets, Trump slammed Senators John McCain and Lindsay Graham for being critical of his immigration policies.

In a joint statement, the two Senators feared that this executive order will become a self-inflicted wound in the fight against terrorism.

"At this very moment, American troops are fighting side-by-side with our Iraqi partners to defeat ISIL. But this executive order bans Iraqi pilots from coming to military bases in Arizona to fight our common enemies," the two Senators said.

- (With PTI inputs)