

## **Theresa May formally rejects petition against Donald Trump's UK Visit**

15/02/2017 21:33 by admin

**London:** British Prime Minister Theresa May has rejected a petition signed by 1.8 million people calling for the cancellation of the proposed state visit to Britain by US President Donald Trump.

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The rejection comes after the petition 'Prevent Donald Trump from making State Visit to the United Kingdom' has attracted 1.8 million signatures, ensuring a debate in the parliament on the matter on February 20.

Any petition crossing a million signatures has to be considered for a debate in the House of Commons, but the British government has the right to take a stand on the issue in the lead up to that debate.

May's official response said the government believes the US president should be extended the "full courtesy of a State Visit".

“We look forward to welcoming President Trump once dates and arrangements are finalised. [Her Majesty's] government recognises the strong views expressed by the many signatories of this petition, but does not support this petition,” the response read.

“During her visit to the United States on 27 January 2017, the Prime Minister, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, invited President Trump for a State Visit to the UK later this year. The invitation was accepted. This invitation reflects the importance of the relationship between the United States of America and the United Kingdom. At this stage, final dates have not yet been agreed for the State Visit.”

The State Visit, expected later this year in August-September, has been at the centre of a lot of protests and controversy, including Commons Speaker John Bercow's impartiality coming into question after he said Trump should be barred from addressing Parliament.

The petition, to be debated later this month, states: "Donald Trump should be allowed to enter the UK in his capacity as head of the US Government, but he should not be invited to make an official State Visit because it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen."

- (With inputs from PTI)