

Statement by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Office of the Bishop and Committee on Social Concerns on President Trump's Executive Order on Refugees and Immigration

On January 27, 2017, the Office of the President of the United States of America issued an executive order that severely restricts immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The order also suspends all refugee admission to the United States for 120 days and bars all Syrian refugees indefinitely.

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii expresses its concern that such action, temporary or otherwise, appears to ban a class of people based on religion and/or nationality and is not consistent with the values upon which the United States of America is founded. Such action which applies in a blanket manner to those of the Muslim Tradition raises fear that history is repeating itself. Many people of our own Buddhist religious tradition, because of the ethnicity and nationality of a large portion of our members, experienced discrimination and incarceration following an executive order during WW II.

While we understand the importance of reducing terroristic threats through stricter screening procedures for entry into the United States, our government should not isolate and target entire groups based on religion, ethnicity, and/or nationality. It is the belief of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii that our own security as a nation is inextricably linked with the security of peoples around the world. Our policies should help relieve the suffering of all people, including those of Muslim-majority countries.

Guided by Wisdom and Compassion, may we as individuals, communities, and a nation refrain from actions that cause divisiveness and instead act in ways that lead to peace, harmony, and safety for all peoples.