

EXHIBIT 35

Families hoping to make the U.S. their home scramble to rearrange their lives



Syrians evacuated from the embattled city of Aleppo during a cease-fire arrive Dec. 19 at a refugee camp near Idlib. (Associated Press)

By [Shashank Bengali](#), [Nabih Bulos](#) and [Ramin Mostaghim](#)

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Hours of interviews, months of waiting: they were a small price to pay for Syrians, Iranians and others hoping the U.S. would be their new home.

President Trump appeared to end those hopes Friday with an executive order that was expected to bar refugees from entering the United States, including citizens of several Muslim-majority nations.

For Syrians attempting to flee the nearly six-year-old civil war in their country, Trump's policy, based on a draft of the order, would indefinitely suspend their chances of finding refuge in the U.S., a country that many blame for failing to stop the conflict.

For citizens of countries including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen — whose visa applications

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"Why is Trump victimizing Iranians as people?" asked a 45-year-old engineer in Tehran, who asked that his name be withheld because he did not want to run afoul of U.S. authorities.

Even before Trump signed the executive order Friday afternoon, families in the affected countries reacted to reports about a draft of the policy obtained by the Los Angeles Times and other news organizations.

The Iranian engineer and his wife had traveled to Cyprus to apply for asylum in the U.S., because Iran and the U.S. have not had diplomatic relations since 1979. The couple's 18-year-old daughter is autistic, he said, and refuses to wear a headscarf, which has gotten her arrested by Iran's moral police.

"The education and medical care of an autistic child is breaking me financially," he said. "I hoped that in America we could afford to get her better care and schooling."

Syrians who were in the middle of a lengthy, difficult process to apply for asylum in the U.S. suddenly found their petitions stuck in limbo, with no word as to whether their scheduled interviews would take place.

Abdul Jabbar Yousef, a 33-year old native of Homs, Syria, who is applying for asylum in the U.S., had gone through two interviews over the past year but was unsure if his third interview, scheduled for two weeks from now, was still on. The father of three left Homs in late 2012 and settled in Jordan, before migration officials contacted him and asked if he wanted to go to the U.S.

This week he called the International Organization for Migration, which processes asylum cases, but officers there said they had heard nothing.

"We asked if they could switch our case to another country, and they said it was unlikely," Yousef said.

For Abdul Salam Hussein, 21, going to America meant a chance to complete his studies.

His family had applied for asylum in the U.S. two years ago, after they fled the northern Syrian city of Aleppo in early 2014. His parents, along with most of his younger brothers and sisters, had already been granted asylum, but Hussein was forced to apply separately when he turned 21.

He hoped to become a journalist and prepared for the TOEFL, an English proficiency test foreign students must take to apply for U.S. universities. He had also picked up some Turkish and German living in the city of Bursa, roughly 60 miles south of Istanbul.

"My older brother was a geography teacher in Syria, but now he's working in a garment factory. ... It's not right. That's why we wanted to go to America," he said in a phone interview this week.

With prospects of getting refuge in America dimming, Hussein wondered whether he should have risked his life to join the throngs of Syrians who have fled the country since

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Yet he remained sanguine.

"We learned from the war not to regret anything," he said. "What can I do? Sit down and cry? If they don't [let me into the U.S.] then I'll try somewhere else."

Jamal Abdi, policy director for the National Iranian American Council, an advocacy group based in Washington, said the order had been generating insecurity and uncertainty.

"We're already inundated with calls and emails from people about travel plans they're putting on hold, spouses and family members who are currently traveling and not able to come back to the U.S., a large Iranian student population who are at international conferences and potentially stuck in limbo," Abdi said.

The language in the executive order was so broad, Abdi said, that it was not immediately clear whether green-card holders — who have undergone strict vetting to become permanent U.S. residents — would be allowed to come back to the United States if they were currently overseas.

Simindokht Shirvani, a green-card holder from Iran who lives in Southern California, has been with her pregnant daughter in Iran for the past month and is unsure whether she will be allowed to return to the U.S.

Shirvani, a member of the Bahai religious minority that has complained of widespread discrimination in Iran, said she was shocked at the news. She hoped Trump's policy would make an exception for her faith, as reports suggested that "religious minorities" in the majority-Muslim countries would be exempted from the ban.

"But I am worried about my fellow countrymen and women who are Muslims and may not be admitted to U.S. soil even with a green card," said Shirvani, a 65-year-old widow. "It is not fair."

Hadi Kargar, a retired Iranian education ministry employee in Tehran, and his wife were hoping in February to visit their daughter in Boston, where she is earning a master's degree focusing on human rights.

Two years ago they obtained a U.S. visa from the U.S. consulate in Dubai. They have an appointment there scheduled for next week, but after hearing reports that U.S. authorities have suspended visa interviews for Iranians, they have no idea whether to spend the more than \$1,000 it will cost to get to Dubai.

"We do not know what the answer of the U.S. will be — it is less than 10 days from now," said Kargar, 60. "Hearing the news my wife got so worried that she is sick now. We don't want to migrate to America — we just want to see our daughter."

Foreign students in the U.S. were anticipating being separated from loved ones.

At a pro-immigrant demonstration in New York this week, Saeed Vasebi, a 28-year-old doctoral student from

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"If I leave this country, I cannot get back and I cannot finish my PhD," said Vasebi, who held a placard that read, "We are students, not terrorists."

"I don't know that I can ask my girlfriend to wait four more years for me. We were planning to get married. I can apply for a new visa in Iran. I can ask her to apply for a visa. But it is not a sure thing."

Some institutions were already taking action before Trump signed the order. At a major teaching hospital in Ohio, one official said he had sent instructions to administrators telling them to cancel offers of residency to medical students from some countries.

"We are literally going to look at 'Country of origin' and remove the applicant based on [that]," said the official, who did not want to be named criticizing the policy. "Can't get more racist than that."

Special correspondents Mostaghim reported from Tehran and Bulos from Amman, Jordan, and staff writer Bengali from Mumbai, India. Staff writer Barbara Demick in New York contributed to this report.

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