

# Exhibit A

THE HONORABLE JAMES ROBART

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

STATE OF WASHINGTON, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DONALD TRUMP, President of the  
United States, et al.,

Defendants.

No. 2:17-cv-00141-JLR

**AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF OF  
INTERNATIONAL LAW SCHOLARS  
AND NONGOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF  
PLAINTIFFS**

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1 **CONSENT OF THE PARTIES**

2 Counsel for Plaintiffs have consented to the filing of this brief. Counsel for Defendants  
3 have stated that they take no position with respect to the filing of this brief.  
4

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## I. INTEREST OF *AMICI CURIAE*<sup>1</sup>

The individual *amici* whose views are presented here are international law scholars specializing in public international law and international human rights law. They include members of the International Human Rights Committee of the International Law Association, American Branch, and the Human Rights Interest Group of the American Society of International Law,<sup>2</sup> as well as university professors and practicing lawyers with expertise in these subjects. *Amici* also include nongovernmental organizations with expertise in civil rights law, immigration law, or international human rights law. *Amici* submit this brief to vindicate the public interest in ensuring a proper understanding and application of the international human rights law relevant to this case. The nongovernmental organizations and individual scholars are listed in the Appendix.

## II. INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this brief is to bring to the Court’s attention U.S. treaty provisions and customary international law principles that bear on the legality of Executive Order 13780 of March 6, 2017 (“EO”), which replaces the now-rescinded EO dated January 27, 2017.

International law, which includes treaties ratified by the United States as well as customary international law, is part of U.S. law and must be faithfully executed by the President and enforced by U.S. courts except when clearly inconsistent with the U.S. Constitution or subsequent acts of Congress. The United States is a party to and bound by several international

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<sup>1</sup>No counsel for a party has authored this brief in whole or in part, and no party or counsel for a party has made a monetary contribution intended to fund the preparation or submission of the brief. No person other than *amici* or its counsel has made a monetary contribution to the preparation or submission of this brief. Fed. R. App. P. 29(a)(4)(E).

<sup>2</sup>This brief represents the opinion of the Committee and Interest Group members, not that of the American Society of International Law, International Law Association, or International Law Association American Branch.

1 human rights treaties relevant to the subject matter of the EO. In assessing the legality of the  
2 EO, the Court should be cognizant of those treaty obligations, and of customary international  
3 law, which should influence constructions of the U.S. Constitution and statutes that prohibit  
4 discrimination based on religion or national origin.

5  
6 In addition, the Immigration and Nationality Act and other statutes must be read in  
7 harmony with these international legal obligations pursuant to the Supremacy Clause of the  
8 Constitution and long established principles of statutory construction requiring acts of Congress  
9 to be interpreted in a manner consistent with international law, whenever such a construction is  
10 reasonably possible. In this case, the international law obligations described below reinforce  
11 interpretations of those statutes forbidding discrimination of the type threatened by Sections 2  
12 and 11 of the EO.

### 13 III. ARGUMENT

#### 14 A. International Law Is Relevant to Assessing the Legality of the Executive Order.

15 International law is relevant to this case because the U.S. Constitution makes treaties part  
16 of U.S. law. Customary international law is also part of U.S. law and is enforceable by U.S.  
17 courts. Under the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution, “treaties made . . . under the authority  
18 of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land, and judges of every state shall be  
19 bound thereby.”<sup>3</sup> Although the Constitution does not require legislation prior to treaties taking  
20 legal effect, the Supreme Court distinguishes between self-executing and non-self-executing  
21 treaties.<sup>4</sup> The Senate or the President have declared that the relevant human rights treaties to  
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26 <sup>3</sup> U.S. Const. art. VI, cl. 2.

<sup>4</sup> See Restatement (Third) of Foreign Relations Law § 111(3)-(4) (1987).

1 which the United States is a party are non-self-executing.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, by ratifying those  
2 treaties, the United States bound itself to provide judicial or other remedies for violations of  
3 treaty obligations.<sup>6</sup> Thus, even if the treaty provisions themselves are not directly enforceable in  
4 U.S. courts, the rights they grant should be protected by courts through their interpretation of  
5 constitutional provisions and statutes addressing the same or similar subject matter.  
6

7 This is consistent with the positions taken by both the Executive Branch and Congress in  
8 those cases in which Congress has not passed implementing legislation.<sup>7</sup> When submitting  
9 human rights treaties to the Senate for its advice and consent, both Presidents George H.W. Bush  
10 and William Clinton assured the Senate that the United States could and would fulfill its treaty  
11 commitments by applying existing federal constitutional and statutory law.<sup>8</sup> Courts generally  
12 construe federal constitutional and statutory law to be consistent with human rights treaties in  
13 part because the Senate has relied on such assurances as a basis for its consent to ratification.<sup>9</sup>  
14 The United States acknowledged this principle in its comments to the U.N. Committee Against  
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17 <sup>5</sup> See, e.g., 138 Cong. Rec. S4781-01 (daily ed. Apr. 2, 1992) (International Covenant on Civil and Political  
18 Rights); Sen. Exec. Rpt. 101-30, Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification (1990), at II(2) (Convention  
Against Torture).

19 <sup>6</sup> See, e.g., International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights art. 2(2), Dec. 19, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171  
(1976) [hereinafter “CCPR”].

20 <sup>7</sup> See, e.g., U.N. Doc. CAT/C/28/Add.5, paras. 58-60 (“Where domestic law already makes adequate  
21 provision for the requirements of the treaty and is sufficient to enable the United States to meet its international  
obligations, the United States does not generally believe it necessary to adopt implementing legislation.”).

22 <sup>8</sup> During Senate hearings on the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading  
23 Treatment or Punishment (“CAT”), June 26, 1987, 1465 U.N.T.S. 113, the State Department Legal Advisor told the  
Senate: “Any public official in the United States, at any level of government, who inflicts torture . . . would be  
subject to an effective system of control and punishment in the U.S. legal system.” Hearing Before the Comm. on  
Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 101st Cong. (1990), at 8.

24 Similarly, with respect to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial  
25 Discrimination (“CERD”), Dec. 21, 1965, G.A. Res. 2106 (XX), Annex, 660 U.N.T.S. 195, the Clinton  
Administration told the Senate: “As was the case with the prior treaties, existing U.S. law provides extensive  
26 protections and remedies sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the present Convention.” Senate Comm. on  
Foreign Relations, Report on International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, S.  
Exec. Rep. No. 103-29, at 25-26 (1994).

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Immigration & Naturalization Serv. v. Stevic*, 467 U.S. 407, 426 (1984).

1 Torture: “Even where a treaty is ‘non-self-executing,’ courts may nonetheless take notice of the  
2 obligations of the United States thereunder in an appropriate case and may refer to the principles  
3 and objectives thereof, as well as to the stated policy reasons for ratification.”<sup>10</sup> “Taking notice”  
4 of treaty obligations comports with a core principle of statutory construction announced by the  
5 Supreme Court in *Murray v. The Charming Betsy*: “[A]n act of Congress ought never to be  
6 construed to violate the law of nations if any other possible construction remains.”<sup>11</sup> That  
7 doctrine has been consistently and recently reaffirmed by the Supreme Court.<sup>12</sup>

8  
9 Moreover, in *Filartiga v. Pena-Irala*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit  
10 observed that a treaty that is not self-executing may provide evidence of customary international  
11 law.<sup>13</sup> Customary international law must be enforced in U.S. courts even in the absence of  
12 implementing legislation, regardless of whether customary rules appear in a treaty.<sup>14</sup> In *The*  
13 *Paquete Habana*, the Supreme Court held that customary international law “is part of our law”  
14 and directly enforceable in courts when no conflicting treaty, legislative act, or judicial decision  
15 controls.<sup>15</sup> As discussed below, several human rights treaty rules applicable in this case are also  
16 customary international law.  
17

18 The President is also obligated to respect international law pursuant to his constitutional  
19 duty faithfully to execute the law.<sup>16</sup> Because Article VI of the Constitution makes treaties the  
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22 <sup>10</sup> State Reports—Convention Against Torture—U.S.A., U.N. Doc. CAT/C/28/Add.5, para. 57 (Feb. 9,  
2000) (citing *Sale v. Haitian Ctrs. Council*, 509 U.S. 155 (1994)).

<sup>11</sup> 6 U.S. (2 Cranch) 64, 118 (1804); accord *Talbot v. Seeman*, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 1, 43 (1801).

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., *F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd. v Empagran S.A.*, 542 U.S. 155, 164 (2004).

<sup>13</sup> 630 F.2d 876, 882 n.9 (2d Cir. 1980).

<sup>14</sup> Restatement (Third) of the Foreign Relations Law of the United States § 111(3).

<sup>15</sup> 175 U.S. 677, 700 (1900); see also *Filartiga*, 603 F.2d at 886 (“Appellees . . . advance the proposition  
25 that the law of nations forms a part of the laws of the United States only to the extent that Congress has acted to  
26 define it. This extravagant claim is amply refuted by the numerous decisions applying rules of international law  
uncodified by any act of Congress.”).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Const. art. II, sec. 3.

1 supreme law of the land, the President is constitutionally required to comply with U.S. treaty  
2 obligations as well as with customary international law. This was the intent of the Framers.<sup>17</sup>  
3 Courts therefore have a duty to restrain federal executive action that conflicts with a duly ratified  
4 treaty. As the Supreme Court wrote in ordering the President to restore a French merchant ship  
5 to its owner pursuant to a treaty obligation: “The constitution of the United States declares a  
6 treaty to be the supreme law of the land. Of consequence its obligation on the courts of the  
7 United States must be admitted.”<sup>18</sup>

8  
9 Even if the President were not directly bound by international law, however, he is still  
10 obligated to comply with the Constitution itself and all applicable legislation enacted by  
11 Congress within its authority, which (as noted) must be interpreted in a manner consistent with  
12 international law whenever possible.

13 The following sections identify the treaties and customary international law relevant to  
14 the legality of the EO.

## 15 **B. International Law Regarding Discrimination on the Basis of Religion and National** 16 **Origin**

### 17 **1. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

18 Discrimination based on religion or national origin is prohibited by the International  
19 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“CCPR”). The United States ratified the CCPR in  
20 1992.<sup>19</sup>

21 Article 2 of the CCPR states in relevant part:

- 22 1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure  
23 to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights  
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25 <sup>17</sup> Alexander Hamilton, *Pacificus No. 1* (June 29, 1793), reprinted in 15 The Papers of Alexander Hamilton  
33, 33-43 (Harold C. Syrett ed. 1969).

26 <sup>18</sup> *United States v. The Schooner Peggy*, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 103, 109 (1801).

<sup>19</sup> 138 Cong. Rec. S4781-01 (daily ed., Apr. 2, 1992).

1 recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as  
2 race, . . . religion, . . . national or social origin, . . . or other status.

3 3. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes:

4 (a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are  
5 violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has  
6 been committed by persons acting in an official capacity;

7 (b) To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto  
8 determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or  
9 by any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State,  
10 and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy;

11 (c) To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when  
12 granted.

13 The United Nations Human Rights Committee (“HRC”) is charged by the CCPR to  
14 monitor implementation by state parties and to issue guidance on its proper interpretation. The  
15 HRC interprets article 2 to prohibit “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference” based  
16 on a prohibited ground, and which has “the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the  
17 recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing.”<sup>20</sup> To justify a derogation  
18 from the nondiscrimination (or any other human rights) duty, a measure must pursue a legitimate  
19 aim and be proportionate to that aim.<sup>21</sup> A “proportionate” measure is one effective at achieving  
20 the aim and narrowly tailored (or “necessary”) to it.<sup>22</sup>

21 The substantive rights guaranteed by the CCPR, which must be protected without  
22 discrimination based on religion or national origin under article 2, include the protection of the  
23 family. Article 23 provides in relevant part: “The family is the natural and fundamental group  
24

25 <sup>20</sup> Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 18, para. 6, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1Rev.1 at 26 (1994).

26 <sup>21</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Recommendation No. 30, para. 4, 64th  
Sess., U.N. Doc. CERD/C/64/Misc.11/rev.3 (2004).

<sup>22</sup> See Aaron Xavier Fellmeth, *Paradigms of International Human Rights Law* 119-21 (2016).

1 of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.”<sup>23</sup> The HRC has interpreted this  
2 right to include living together, which in turn obligates the state to adopt appropriate measures  
3 “to ensure the unity or reunification of families, particularly when their members are separated  
4 for political, economic or similar reasons.”<sup>24</sup>

5  
6 Restrictions on travel and entry caused by the EO that impose disparate and unreasonable  
7 burdens on the exercise of this right violate CCPR article 2. The HRC has explained that,  
8 although the CCPR does not generally

9 recognize a right of aliens to enter or reside in the territory of a State party . . . , in  
10 certain circumstances an alien may enjoy the protection of the Covenant even in  
11 relation to entry or residence, for example, when considerations of non-  
discrimination, prohibition of inhuman treatment and respect for family life  
arise.<sup>25</sup>

12  
13 Thus, the right of entry is not beyond the scope of the CCPR. On the contrary, the  
14 CCPR’s nondiscrimination principles and protections for family life should be considered by  
15 courts in interpreting government measures affecting family unification. This treaty-based  
16 protection for family life is consistent with Supreme Court jurisprudence respecting the role of  
17 due process of law in governmental decisions affecting family unity.<sup>26</sup>

18  
19 More generally, article 26 of the CCPR prohibits discrimination in any government  
20 measure, regardless of whether the measure violates a Covenant right:

21 All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to  
22 the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any  
discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against

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23 <sup>23</sup> CCPR, *supra* note 6, art. 22(1).

24 <sup>24</sup> Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 19, para. 5 (1990), U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 28  
(1994).

25 <sup>25</sup> Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 15, para. 5 (1986), U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 18  
(1994).

26 <sup>26</sup> See *Landon v. Plasencia*, 459 U.S. 21, 34, 37 (1982); *Kerry v. Din*, \_\_ U.S. \_\_, 135 S. Ct. 2128, 2140–41  
(2015) (Kennedy, J., concurring).

1 discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion,  
2 political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

3 As interpreted by the HRC and consistent with its wording, this provision “prohibits  
4 discrimination in law or fact in *any field* regulated” by the government.<sup>27</sup> Notably, unlike CCPR  
5 article 2, the equal protection provisions of CCPR article 26 lack article 2’s limitation to “all  
6 individuals within [the state party’s] territory and subject to its jurisdiction.”

7 The nondiscrimination provisions of the CCPR are also customary international law  
8 binding on the United States, forming part of U.S. law unless contrary to the Constitution or a  
9 statute. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United States approved in 1948,  
10 mandates nondiscrimination in religion and national origin, equal protection of the law, and  
11 protection from arbitrary interference in family life.<sup>28</sup> The American Declaration of the Rights  
12 and Duties of Man, which the United States approved when it signed and ratified the Charter of  
13 the Organization of American States the same year, has similar provisions in articles 6 and 17.<sup>29</sup>  
14 These nondiscrimination principles and the right to family unity have become sufficiently  
15 widespread and accepted by the international community that they have entered into customary  
16 international law in the present day.<sup>30</sup>

## 19 **2. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial** 20 **Discrimination**

21 The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination  
22 (“CERD”) also bars discrimination based on national origin. The United States has been a party

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23 <sup>27</sup> Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 18, *supra* note 20, para. 12 (emphasis added).

24 <sup>28</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, arts. 2, 7, 12, G.A. Res. 217A(III), U.N. Doc. A/810 at 71  
25 (1948).

26 <sup>29</sup> O.A.S. Res. XXX (1948), Basic Documents Pertaining to Human Rights in the Inter-American System,  
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<sup>30</sup> See Hurst Hannum, *The Status of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in National and*  
*International Law*, 25 Ga. J. Int’l & Comp. L. 287, 329 (1995/96).

1 to the CERD since 1994.<sup>31</sup> Under article 2, paragraph (1)(a), each state party commits to  
2 refraining from and prohibiting all forms of racial discrimination, and each further undertakes “to  
3 engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination . . . and to ensure that all public authorities  
4 and public institutions, national or local, shall act in conformity with this obligation.” CERD  
5 defines “racial discrimination” to include distinctions and restrictions based on national origin.<sup>32</sup>  
6  
7 With regard to immigration practices, CERD makes clear that states are free to adopt only such  
8 “nationality, citizenship or naturalization” policies that “do not discriminate against any  
9 particular nationality.”<sup>33</sup> Like the nondiscrimination provisions of CCPR article 26, CERD  
10 article 2 does not limit its application to citizens or resident noncitizens. While CERD does not  
11 speak specifically to restrictions on entry of nonresident aliens, the general language of CERD  
12 expresses a clear intention to eliminate discrimination based on race or national origin from all  
13 areas of government activity: “States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial  
14 discrimination in all its forms . . . without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic  
15 origin . . . .”<sup>34</sup>  
16

17 Article 4 of CERD further provides that state parties “[s]hall not permit public authorities  
18 or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination,” which (as  
19 noted) includes discrimination based on national origin. The Committee on the Elimination of  
20 Racial Discrimination, the body of independent experts appointed to monitor CERD’s  
21 implementation, interprets article 4 to require states to combat speech stigmatizing or  
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25 <sup>31</sup> See 140 Cong. Rec. S7634-02 (daily ed., June 24, 1994).

26 <sup>32</sup> *Id.* art. 1(1).

<sup>33</sup> *Id.* art. 1(3).

<sup>34</sup> *Id.* art. 5.

1 stereotyping non-citizens generally, immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers,<sup>35</sup> with statements  
2 by high-ranking officials causing “particular concern.”<sup>36</sup> In *TBB-Turkish Union in*  
3 *Berlin/Brandenburg v. Germany*, for example, the Committee specifically determined that  
4 Germany violated the Convention when it failed to discipline or punish a minor government  
5 official who had *inter alia* drawn attention to low employment rates of Turkish and Arab  
6 populations in Germany, suggested their unwillingness to integrate into German society, and  
7 proposed that their immigration should be discouraged.<sup>37</sup> These statements, the Committee  
8 determined, implied “generalized negative characteristics of the Turkish population” and incited  
9 racial discrimination.<sup>38</sup>

11 The legality of the EO in this case, and the proper interpretation of the statutes and  
12 constitutional provisions cited by the parties, should be assessed with those proscriptions in  
13 mind. Those international law principles require courts to reject any attempt by the President to  
14 define classes based on national origin or religion, and then to impose on those classes disparate  
15 treatment, except to the extent necessary to achieve a legitimate government purpose.

### 17 **C. Relevant Provisions of the Executive Order**

18 Section 2 categorically suspends immigration from six specified countries—Iran, Libya,  
19 Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, and imposes special requirements on immigrants from Iraq.  
20 Section 2(a), moreover, authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to demand “certain  
21 information” from “particular countries even if it is not needed from every country.”  
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24 <sup>35</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Recommendation No. 35: Combating  
25 Racist Hate Speech, para. 6, U.N. Doc. CERD/C/OC/35 (2013).

26 <sup>36</sup> *Id.* para. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Comm. on the Elimination of Racial Discrim., Commun. No. 48/2010 (Feb. 26, 2013), U.N. Doc.  
CERD/C/82/D/48/2010.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.* para. 12.6.

1           The EO thus makes an explicit distinction based on national origin that, unless necessary  
2 and narrowly tailored to achieve a legitimate government aim, would violate U.S. obligations  
3 under international law. In effect, the EO also makes a distinction based on religion, as plaintiffs  
4 have argued. Notably, every one of the designated countries has a population that is  
5 overwhelmingly Muslim,<sup>39</sup> and the EO does not suspend immigration from any state with a non-  
6 Muslim majority, including some countries identified by the United States as state sponsors of  
7 terrorism.  
8

9           International law is also relevant to Section 11 of the EO, which requires the Secretary of  
10 Homeland Security to “collect and make publicly available” certain information relating *inter*  
11 *alia* to convictions of terrorism-related offenses, government charges of terrorism, and “gender-  
12 based violence against women” by foreign nationals. The EO requires no publication of similar  
13 information relating to U.S. nationals. By mandating that the Secretary publish pejorative  
14 information about noncitizens without publishing comparable information about U.S. citizens,  
15 Section 11 makes a suspect distinction based on national origin. While Section 11 has not been  
16 challenged specifically by the plaintiffs, it may bear on the intent to discriminate, because the  
17 decision to publish derogatory information about noncitizens alone is stigmatizing, and appears  
18 to be motivated by a desire to characterize noncitizens as more prone to terrorism or gender-  
19 based violence than U.S. citizens. Apart from what it may indicate with respect to intent, a  
20 measure designed to stigmatize noncitizens cannot be proportionate and thus violates article 26  
21 of the CCPR and articles 2 and 4 of the CERD.  
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26           <sup>39</sup> See Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>.

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**IV. CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, *amici* request that the Court consider U.S. obligations under international law, which forms part of U.S. law, in evaluating the legality of the EO.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 13th day of March, 2017.

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2 The *amici* are nongovernmental organizations and legal scholars specializing in public  
3 international law and international human rights law. They have substantial expertise in issues  
4 directly affecting the outcome of this case. These *amici* are identified below.  
5

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13 International Center for Advocates Against Secular Communities of Arizona  
14 Discrimination T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
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20 Institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only; opinions in this brief  
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1 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

2 I hereby certify that on March 13, 2017, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk  
3 of the Court using the United States District Court ECF system, which will send notification of  
4 such filing to all attorneys of record.

5 DATED: March 13, 2017

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