

# Michigan grapples with ban on refugees, citizens from 7 countries: "We're in total crisis."

By [KATE WELLS](#) • 16 HOURS AGO



*A sign at near the Ambassador Bridge crossing between Canada and Michigan*

THOMAS HAWK/FLICKR COLLECTIVE COMMONS

A Syrian refugee living in Michigan was waiting for his wife to join him in the next couple of weeks.

“There’s no hope of that happening now,” says Sean de Four, vice president of refugee resettlement at [Samaritas](#).

Another 16 refugees were scheduled to arrive in the state next week, he says. Half are from Iraq and the others are from Syria. Now de Four’s received word that all of those resettlements have been canceled, and the refugees will remain in a camp in Turkey.

“It’s just horrific when you hear stories like that,” he said.

All day Saturday, Susan Reed’s email was filling up with questions from attorneys whose Michigan clients could be stranded right now.

Those clients are lawful, permanent residents in Michigan, she says, but they’re originally from one of the seven countries listed in President Donald Trump’s executive order (Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen) and they’re out of the country at the moment.

So for at least the next 90 days, they could be stuck.

“As of this morning, the Department of Homeland Security has indicated that [people with green cards](#) who just happen to be out of the United States on Friday, will not be let in to return to their families, their jobs, their lives,” says Reed, the managing attorney of the [Michigan Immigrant Rights Center](#).

“We’re in total crisis about how this affects Michigan families, tens of thousands of Michigan families with green card holders affected by... the Trump order.”

One of the MIRC’s volunteer attorneys is working with an Iraqi family who “last night, struggled to enter the country before it was clear that green card holders were being kept out of the country,” Reed says. They did, however,

manage to get through. And at least one green card holder was turned back from the U.S.-Canadian border in Michigan, according to Reed, though she says she can't share additional details at the moment.

“Obviously, southeast Michigan is a region that people flow in and out across the Canadian border, for shopping, for all kind of ordinary activities,” Reed said, “So we know there are almost certainly some who are going to be on the Canadian side of the border.”

Reed's group is calling around to find Canadians who might be able to house anybody turned back from Michigan's border. “We have only secured like seven spaces for people with our Canadian friends,” the group [said on Facebook](#).

Meanwhile, protests are being planned for Sunday at the Detroit airport, [according to this Facebook group](#).

Even as [reports came out](#) this evening about green card holders being cleared to re-enter the U.S. on a “case by case” basis, Reed's advice to anybody born in one of those seven countries who's living in Michigan – whether a refugee, immigrant, or permanent resident – is to stay home.

“People from the affected countries, in any immigration status, other than being a naturalized U.S. citizen who has taken the oath, who has their certificate in their hand, should not leave the country,” Reed said.

So what happens at the end of the 90 day temporary freeze?

“I have no idea!” Reed said, “This is a completely unprecedented situation. I would never have imagined that permanent residents of the United States, people who have been granted the permanent right to live and work in the U.S., often in the case of Iraqis because of their service to the U.S.... this is

just not something that happens. I certainly hope that after 90 days they'll be re-admitted. But there's no road map for this.”

As of this evening, U.S. Customs and Border Protection had not responded to requests for information about detentions in Michigan.

Refugee and immigration advocates put moment-by-moment updates and FAQs online throughout the day.

“If you are waiting for a family member to be resettled to the United States or to join you through family reunification, it will probably now take them longer to come to the United States,” the Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County told refugees [on their website](#). “If your family member is from one of the countries that were banned from entering the United States, they will not be allowed to come to the United States until this Executive Order is changed.”

*\*This post has been corrected to reflect that U.S. Customs and Border Protection has not responded to requests for information about detentions in Michigan.*