

Trump adds Chad to renewed travel ban

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Trump's Sunday announcement of a new indefinite travel ban includes the African nation of Chad, a country that has given full support to Washington's imperialist wars conducted against several African nations for over a decade. The limitations on travel from Chad to the US go into effect on October 18.

Taking to Twitter late Sunday, Trump expressed the ban's reactionary nationalist character: "Making America Safe is my number one priority. We will not admit those into our country we cannot safely vet."

As an explanation for Chad's addition to the list, Trump's proclamation states, "Chad does not adequately share public-safety and terrorism-related information and fails to satisfy at least one key risk criterion."

The list of countries to be restricted include Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Somalia, which were part of the initial ban, with the addition of North Korea, Venezuela, and Chad. Without explanation, Sudan was dropped from the list.

Significant is the fact that of the countries on the list, with the exception of Chad, all are either targets of the US for regime change or are currently undergoing US bombardment. In the case of Chad, the African nation has served a subservient role to Washington's predatory aims on the continent.

The addition of two "non-Muslim" countries, North Korea and Venezuela, owe to the Trump administration's attempt to scrub the xenophobic tinge that characterized the original and to ensure the measure's resistance to court challenges.

The initial travel ban was announced a few days after Trump was inaugurated, and its implementation was blocked by a federal court as unconstitutional; a revised travel ban was also blocked in the lower courts leading the Trump administration to an appeal before the Supreme Court, which affirmed the measure in June.

Chad's ruling government of President Idriss Deby

issued a statement to the media condemning the ban. "The Chadian Government expresses its incomprehension in the face of the official reasons behind this decision," adding, "reasons that contrast with the efforts and the ongoing commitments of Chad in the fight against terrorism."

The inclusion of Chad in the ban, a country which has lent its full support to Washington's imperialist operations across the Sahel region of Africa, provoked severe criticism from sections within the America ruling class, reflecting the broader conflict since Trump's election over the direction of foreign policy.

There are concerns that the implementation of the reactionary travel restrictions will undermine the global economic order over which American capitalism presides, and provoke a backlash against the US from Washington's allies around the globe, in particular Europe.

Speaking to *Foreign Policy*, Richard Downie, deputy director of the Africa program at the Center for Strategic International Studies, explained the character of Chad's close relationship with Washington and its imperialist prerogatives on the continent, stating, "...the ban would only harm coordination between the Pentagon and Chad," adding "[the ban] cannot be anything but damaging to a bilateral relationship."

Chad has received tens of millions in US military aid to carry out Washington's neo-colonial operations across the Sahel region by utilizing the standard pretext of "fighting terrorism." Currently, on the behalf of Washington, Chad's forces are engaged in a protracted battle against the Islamist militant group Boko Haram.

Recently, the US opened a \$300 million embassy in capital city N'Djamena, making clear Chad's geo-strategic importance to Washington.

Additionally, in 2013 Chad lent its forces in the US-backed French military invasion of Mali to neutralize Islamist rebels who conducted an insurgency against

the US/French-backed forces who overthrew the government in Bamako.

Illuminating Washington's interests in Chad, J. Peter Pham, an Africa specialist for the Atlantic Council, and under consideration by the Trump administration for deputy assistant secretary for African affairs, was more explicit.

Pham, in speaking with the *New York Times*, alleged that Chad had "played a somewhat duplicitous role against Boko Haram," and had only cracked down on the Islamist militia when Chad's trade routes were threatened.

Speaking on Chad's geostrategic importance for Washington, Pham stated that "[Chad is] geographically, a country one doesn't want to alienate." Expressing the true face of Washington's aim of unquestioned dominance of the continent, Pham added, "they've been a necessary partner but not a wholehearted one."

In the country of 14 million, the chief victim of Washington's calculations are the Chadian people, of whom 90 percent reside in impoverished conditions. The renewed travel ban represents an escalation of Washington's imperialist offensive in the Sahel region and across the African continent.



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