

Iranian student deported from Boston by Customs and Border Protection despite court order

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This past Monday, the Customs and Border Protection agency (CBP) denied entry to 24-year-old Iranian student Mohammad Shahbab Dehghani Hossein Abadi upon his arrival at Logan International Airport in Boston. At the time of his deportation, Hossein held a valid F1 student visa recently issued by the United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) to continue pursuing a bachelor's degree at Northeastern University in Boston.

The news of Abadi's detention and threatened deportation by CBP prompted protesters to gather at Boston's Logan Airport. Lawyers working in association with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) immediately filed an emergency petition with a Massachusetts district court judge on Abadi's behalf, seeking a stay of deportation. The federal judge granted Hossein a 48-hour emergency stay at 9:27 p.m. on Monday. CBP, despite having reportedly told multiple attorneys that Abadi was removed from the outbound plane after the order was issued, deported him at 10:03 p.m.

When contacted by NBC news, federal law enforcement officials stated that Mohammad's family had connections with individuals "intimately involved" with a US-designated terrorist organization. However, according to NBC, the officials "did not cite any alleged connections between US-designated terrorist organizations and Dehghani himself." Both the ACLU and Abadi's attorneys were quick to point out the false nature of CBP's allegations, as he had undergone a lengthy, nine-month background investigation prior to being granted a visa.

Susan Church, part of Hossein's legal team, told reporters outside of the courthouse that her client

underwent "an extensive processing period before he came back, which means that overseas investigators investigate his family, they speak to employers, they do a very thorough investigation." In their filing, the attorneys allege that the removal is in fact "a result of additional scrutiny targeting Iranian citizens" and, as such, "violates equal protection guarantees against discrimination based on national origin, constitutional due process guarantees, and the Administrative Procedure Act." The filing also asserts that Abadi had been denied the right to speak with a lawyer "or any other person in the United States" while in detention, a further violation of his rights.

In claiming the CBP targets travelers based on their nationality or ethnic origin, Abadi's lawyers are citing the official policy of the president, who enacts immigration policy with the guidance of his 33-year-old fascistic adviser, Stephen Miller. One of Trump's first initiatives upon assuming the presidency was enacting the "Executive Order Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States," a racist and discriminatory measure preventing citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen—all countries with Muslim majorities—from entering the United States.

By doing so, Trump was making good on his campaign promise to enact a "total and complete" ban on Muslims entering the United States. Parts of the law were initially overturned through court challenges. However, Trump issued a second executive order which was ultimately upheld by the Supreme Court. As it stands, there are severe restrictions on persons applying to travel to the United States from Libya, Yemen, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Somalia and

Venezuela.

Abadi's deportation is only the latest in a string of actions by the Federal Government targeting Iranians. On January 4, reports emerged that CBP was detaining dozens of Iranians and American citizens of Iranian heritage at the Canadian border, many of them on their way back from an Iranian pop concert in Vancouver. Only a day earlier, in gross violation of international law, the United States had assassinated Qassem Suleimani, a general in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard and the second most powerful man in that country after head of state Ali Khamenei. This illegal act brought the world to the brink of a war with Iran with the potential to draw in nuclear-armed powers Iran and Russia.

In its drive to whip up xenophobic and racist sentiments among its constituents, the Trump administration will only become more brazen in its attacks on people born abroad, whether trying to enter this country or already residing here. As the spearhead of these efforts, federal agencies act with virtual impunity, hunting down undocumented workers and placing them in concentration camps, kidnapping children at the Mexican border and even deporting American citizens.

These actions, which have shocked the nation, represent the intensification of policies enacted under the administration of Barack Obama, who deported roughly 2.5 million undocumented immigrants from the United States. Trump currently enjoys tacit support for his fascist policies by a Democratic Party whose main concern is not human rights violations or acts of war, but the president's perceived "softness" on Russia and lack of commitment to arming its adversaries.



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