

News

Iran responds to President Trump's executive order

Seung Pang, Staff Writer

Leila Ghannad, a daughter of Iranian immigrants, has a mother who had been planning a trip to see her family in Iran one more time before she is too old. But now, the trip is no longer her summer plan.

After President Trump signed the executive order, the Iranian government also put restrictions on US citizens entering Iran. Ghannad's mother doesn't know if she will be able to travel to her home country again.

"There's a risk of her not being able to get into Iran and not get back into the US," said Ghannad, an assistant director of international programs at Meredith College. "It affects me pretty directly when it's your mama, right?" she said.

President Trump recently

announced the new vetting measure, so-called refugee ban, which restricts nationals of "countries of particular concern" from entering the US. Those countries on the list are Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

"We're not admitting into our country the very threats our soldiers are fighting overseas. We only want to admit those who will support our country and love deeply our people," said President Trump at press conference. "We will not forget the lessons of 9/11 nor the heroes who lost their lives at the Pentagon."

"It will be recorded in history as a great gift to extremists and their supporters," said Iranian Foreign Minister,

Mohammad Javad Zarif. He criticized President Trump's executive order as the "imprudent decision to apply collective discrimination against citizens of Muslim nations."

"While respecting the American people and differentiating between them and the hostile policies of the U.S. Government, Iran will take reciprocal measures to safeguard its citizens, until the US restrictions against Iranian nationals are lifted," said Zarif in a statement.

"The executive order is temporary, except in the case of Syrian refugees," said David McLennan, a professor of political science at Meredith College. "After the original period, refugees may resume entering

the US."

Under the 1980 Refugee Act, the president was given the right to set the number of refugees that would settle in the United States.

President Obama increased the number of refugees from 85,000 in 2016 to 110,000 in the 2017 fiscal year, from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017. President Trump's executive order stops refugees from seven countries for six months, according to McLennan.

Ghanad has had international students ask her "if their countries are next."

"I hope my international students don't feel like they're not being supported," she said.

Supporting Our Muslim Family

Yessy Anorve-Basoria

Meredith's Refugee and Immigrant Club and Meredith's International Association invited the Meredith community to participate in World Hijab Day on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2017.

Refugee and Immigrant Club President, Nabihah Khan, and vice president, Leslie Arreaza, greeted students and faculty members in the Diversity Room at 9 a.m. to assist with transforming a scarf into a hijab, along with answering questions of what a hijab represents.

Arreaza explained that a

hijab is a headscarf that can be "accompanied by the wearing of loose-fitting, non-revealing clothing, also referred to as hijab" and is a choice Muslim women make after puberty for a variety of reasons. These reasons include faith, law, cultural identity, and modesty along with other reasons that are not verbally spoken of.

"In the light of everything that has happened, it is important to stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters. It is hard to reach everyone individually, but by starting with a simple step it shows

we stand together," explained Arreaza in response to why we, the Meredith community, should participate in World Hijab Day. Khan added, "It is also a peaceful way to stand by people from different backgrounds."

Like the community at Meredith College, New York State assemblyman David Weprin said in a statement that "the World Hijab Day movement seeks to end the discrimination and judgment that comes with wearing a hijab."

Many individuals, whether they are participating by wearing

a hijab, marching for rights, or boycotting transportation systems such as Uber, are all aiming to stand by the Muslim community.



Continuing Their Legacy

Nabihah Khan, Staff Writer

Two years ago on Feb. 10, 2015, the world lost three beautiful Muslim-American lives as the Abu-Salha and Barakat families lost three children. Deah Barakat, his newly-wed wife Yusor Abu-Salha, and her younger sister Razan Abu-Salha were shot and killed, execution style, by their neighbor in the couple's home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This tragedy happened because a 46 year old man decided to take his gun over to his neighbor's house and end their lives over a supposed parking dispute.

"I think the anniversary kind of comes and goes and a lot of people seem to want to remember them more on the days of the anniversary, but I can tell you that we don't forget, like the anniversary is literally just another day for us," says Farris Barakat, Deah's older brother.

Deah Barakat was a 23 year old student in his second year at UNC's School of Dentistry. Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha was 21 years old; she studied human biology at NC State and planned to join Deah at the School of Dentistry at UNC. The two were engaged in February of 2013 and were married December of 2014. Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha was a 19-year-old student at NC State University studying architecture and environmental design. Deah spent much of his time volunteering for the homeless to provide free dental supplies and food, as well as helping fundraise for Syrian Dental relief, an organization that helps victims of the Syrian crisis get dental care. Razan supported charities like Global Deaf Muslim.

After the murder of Deah, Yusor, and Razan, Farris decided

he had to tell their story, and would do so through the house that his parents inherited through Deah: "I remember stepping on the stairs and I said well what if we called it The Light House, two words, because my brother's name Deah directly translates from Arabic to English as meaning light." Other than telling the Muslim-American narrative, The Light House is run mostly by volunteers and used as a space to provide the youth with a unified and structured community.



Farris said that there is this understanding in Islam that with difficulty comes ease. He then talked about how he decided on calling them Our Three Winners: "If you think back to the December that they had before their murder, they were at the pinnacle of their lives, they had just gotten married, Yusor just got accepted into dental school, they just renovated their apartment...they were at the best of their lives in a sense...so right away I was like if this is true that they are killed...if this is true, then they won." He added how at first he was going to call them our three angels but decided that they are actually winners. Our Three Winners' legacy is continued not only through Farris but also many other members of the community.