

# Wait it out, say immigration lawyers to Canadian dual citizens, travelers

[June Chua](#)

[Yahoo Canada News](#)

January 30, 2017



*Canadian immigration lawyers are urging patience in the wake of Trump's travel ban. Photo from Getty Images*

Immigration experts are warning caution and patience for confused Canadians hoping to cross the U.S. border since Donald Trump imposed a travel ban on several Muslim-majority countries.

“Is it vital that you have to be in the U.S. for business or, say, family reasons?” says Canadian immigration lawyer Zool Suleman.

“We have to be very cautious now and wait until things clear,” [the Vancouver lawyer](#) told Yahoo Canada News.

“It is chaos at the borders and at the airports. I wouldn’t go if it wasn’t essential for me to be there,” said Suleman, who has been an immigration lawyer since 1992.

Ever since Trump signed [the broad immigration order](#) on Friday, [American airports have been jammed](#) with protesters and confused travellers who have been detained or told to get back on a plane and leave the U.S. There are concerns the wording of the order could lead to [further restrictions](#) for countries beyond the seven listed.

Watching the turmoil unfold has been emotional for Suleman who was a refugee from Uganda in 1972, escaping the regime of Idi Amin.

“I can relate to the anxiety, the human toll this is taking on the people [who have been detained]. It brought back a lot of memories for me.”

On Sunday, Canada’s Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen said the [White House has assured him](#) that dual citizens with a Canadian passport are allowed in, as well as permanent residents of Canada if they have a valid Canadian permanent resident card and passport from one of the seven affected countries.

[Canadians who do face problems](#) getting across the U.S. border are urged to call Canada’s emergency travel number, 613-996-8885.

“But, I’m getting reports from other lawyers in the U.S. that there’s still a lot of misunderstanding,” said Suleman. “There is litigation going on and more litigation will be filed.”

Suleman said he would not tell anyone who is from one of those seven countries or anyone who is Muslim, for that matter, to attempt to cross the border at this time.

“Be prepared to face increased scrutiny, questions and long delay times if you do,” he said. “There has been racial profiling going on at those border offices for years, especially since 9/11. If you look like you could be Muslim, then you could be singled out.”

London, Ont. [immigration lawyer Ed Corrigan](#) agrees. Wait it out.

“As it stands, a [federal court judge in New York](#) put a hold on Trump’s executive order. But there’s a question whether federal homeland officials are going to follow that order,” said Corrigan, who is one of a few Ontario lawyers [certified as a specialist](#) in refugee protection and immigration law by the Law Society of Upper Canada.

### **‘Legal civil war’**

“We have to wait and see if the government files an appeal,” said Corrigan, who has been practicing for 25 years. “There’s confusion. There have been Canadian citizens with dual Iranian nationality turned back by the border officials. People at Homeland Security aren’t the best informed.”

Corrigan points out [16 state attorney generals](#) — including in New York, California and Pennsylvania — have condemned the executive order as illegal and unconstitutional and

also in contravention of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, which was signed by the U.S.

“You just can’t invalidate the Geneva Convention ... [Under the UNHCR conventions](#) you are forbidden to return somebody to a place where they could be at risk of torture,” he explained.

“What we are seeing is a showdown. There’s going to be a legal civil war.”

Corrigan also reiterates that people who “look different” are going to get a second look by homeland officials.

“A lot of Sikhs were having a hard time after 9/11 because these people at the border aren’t very sophisticated — they think Sikhs are Muslims. That’s what you are going to face.”

Corrigan is also wondering about this exemption for Canadians despite the statement from Canada’s minister of immigration.

“There was no exemption in the executive order for Canadians,” he said. “And these airlines, they were all imposing the new rule, which included everyone.”

### **‘Not a good time to travel’**

Both Suleman and Corrigan say it’s hard to gauge when this will clear up: “It could be tomorrow or in two weeks or more. Who knows?” said Suleman.