

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 14, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

On August 12, December 3, and January 11 we sent letters to the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and State, requesting basic information regarding the immigration histories of individuals in the United States recently implicated in terrorism, and prior actions taken to protect our nation from individuals associated with terrorism. To date, we have yet to receive information responsive to these inquiries.

Instead, the Department of State sent a letter partially responsive to two out of fifteen questions asked, the Department of Justice sent a copy of a very rudimentary list it already maintains of individuals convicted of offenses related to terrorism between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2014 (deferring to the Department of Homeland Security to provide immigration information), and the Department of Homeland Security sent a letter on December 31 stating only that a response to our original inquiry would be forthcoming.

Since our last letter in January, we have identified 18 additional individuals who have been implicated in terrorism since early 2014 – bringing the total to 131. Because your Administration has thus far refused to comply with our request for basic information about these individuals, we have continued our search for immigration information about those we identify using publicly available sources. At least 54 of these individuals were born abroad, at least 16 were initially admitted to the United States as refugees, and at least 17 are the natural-born citizen children of first generation immigrants.

We went through the list prepared by the Department of Justice – which provided the names of individuals convicted of terrorism or

terrorism-related offenses between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2014.

Because the Department of Homeland Security failed to provide us with immigration information on the 580 individuals on the Department of Justice's list, we have attempted to obtain information about the immigration history for each individual using publicly available sources. Out of the 580 names on the Department of Justice's list, at least 380 individuals were born abroad, at least 24 were initially admitted to the United States as refugees, and at least 33 had overstayed their visas. Out of the 198 U.S. citizens we were able to identify, at least 100 were naturalized citizens who initially came to the United States through one of our immigration programs. Of those born abroad, at least 62 were from Pakistan, 28 were from Lebanon, 22 were Palestinian, 21 were from Somalia, 20 were from Yemen, 19 were from Iraq, 16 were from Jordan, 17 were from Egypt, and 10 were from Afghanistan.

Because we lack complete information for either list, the numbers are likely much higher. And it is clear that these lists do not include cases that are sealed, have otherwise not been made public, or that have been handled strictly through civil immigration proceedings. Nevertheless, these data make clear that the United States not only lacks the ability to properly screen individuals prior to their arrival, but also that our nation has an unprecedented assimilation problem.

When compared with your Administration's immigration policies, and bearing in mind the four major terrorist attacks in the United States in the last year alone, this inability to properly screen individuals from abroad and assimilate those we admit paints a striking picture. Between Fiscal Years 2009 and 2014, the United States granted green cards to approximately 832,000 individuals from Muslim-majority countries, including approximately 102,000 from Iraq, 102,000 from Pakistan, 85,000 from Iran, nearly 18,000 from Syria, and nearly 20,000 from Yemen. For Fiscal Year 2016, as of June 10, the United States had admitted approximately 19,625 Muslim refugees from across the world, out of approximately 44,340 total refugees. It has also only managed to admit 3,887 Syrian refugees, of whom only 23 were not Muslim.

With your Administration's goal of admitting 10,000 Syrian refugees and a total of 85,000 refugees this fiscal year, your Administration will fall short unless it admits approximately 10,165 refugees in each of the four remaining months, of which approximately

1,528 would have to be from Syria. Given that we have already identified at least 40 individuals who were initially admitted to this country as refugees and who were subsequently convicted or implicated in terrorism – including an Iraqi refugee who was just admitted to the United States in 2012 and arrested in January of this year – it is clear that ensuring the proper screening of refugees is of the utmost importance.

Sunday's terrorist attack in Orlando was the deadliest our nation has experienced since the attacks on September 11, 2001. As we honor and remember the victims of the attacks, we must be vigilant in our defense of our nation, and cognizant of the threats we face. Obtaining the information that we requested is essential.

Therefore, we request that you direct the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and State to immediately coordinate and complete the attached charts and respond to our initial inquiries. Additionally, please ensure that they update the attached charts with information regarding any cases not included, and please ensure that the list is updated through the date of your reply with any new cases that may arise.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this serious matter. Please contact our staffs if you have any questions regarding this request.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Sessions
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator