

Trump to order construction of Mexican border wall, temporarily curb Muslim immigration

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Washington: President Donald Trump is set to sign executive orders restricting immigration and taking steps on his proposed wall on the Mexican border.

File pic - President Donald Trump in Oval office

According to two administration officials, the proposed plans include at least a four-month halt on all refugee admissions, as well as a temporary ban on people coming from some Muslim majority countries.

A representative of a public policy organization that monitors refugee issues said that he was briefed on the details of that proposed action by a government official.

The President is expected to sign the first actions on Wednesday during a trip to the Department of Homeland Security, with additional actions being rolled out over the next few days, The Associated Press reported.

"Big day planned on NATIONAL SECURITY tomorrow. Among many other things, we will build the wall!" Trump tweeted on Tuesday night.

Though the refugee restrictions were still to be finalized, the person briefed on the proposals said that they included a ban on entry to the US for at least 30 days from countries including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, though the person cautioned the details could still change.

There is also likely to be an exception in the refugee stoppage for those fleeing religious persecution if their religion is a minority in their country. That exception could cover Christians fleeing Muslim-majority nations.

Trump campaigned on pledges to tighten US immigration policies, including beefing up border security and stemming the flow of refugees. He also called for halting entry to the US from Muslim countries, but later shifted the policy to a focus on what he called "extreme vetting" for those coming from countries with terrorism ties.

As President, Trump can use an executive order to halt refugee processing. Former President George W Bush used that same power in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Refugee security vetting was reviewed and the process was restarted several months later.

While the specific of Trump's orders were unclear, both administration officials said that the actions would focus in part on the President's plans to construct a wall along the southern border with Mexico. Trump's insistence that Mexico would pay for the wall was among his most popular proposals on the campaign trail, sparking enthusiastic cheers at his raucous rallies.

Mexico has repeatedly said it will not pay for any border wall. Earlier this month, Trump said the building project would initially be paid for with a congressionally approved spending bill and Mexico will eventually reimburse the U.S., though he has not specified how he would guarantee payments.

Trump will meet with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto at the White House next week.

In claiming authority to build a wall, Trump may rely on a 2006 law that authorized several hundred miles of fencing

along the 2,000-mile frontier. That bill led to the construction of about 700 miles of various kinds of fencing designed to block both vehicles and pedestrians.

The Secure Fence Act was signed by then-President George W. Bush and the majority of the fencing in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California was built before he left office. The last remnants were completed after Barack Obama took office in 2009.

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