

17144 Starbucks vows to hire 10,000 refugees as US companies condemn Trump travel ban

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Starbucks has promised to hire 10,000 refugees over five years in response to Donald Trump's executive order temporarily barring refugees access to the US and banning entry for anyone from seven majority Muslim countries.

The move came as leading US companies including Alphabet, Amazon, Ford, Goldman Sachs and Microsoft came out against the policy.

Howard Schultz, the coffee chain's chief executive, said he had deep concern about the president's order and would be taking "resolute" action, starting with offering jobs to refugees.

We are developing plans to hire 10,000 of them over five years in the 75 countries around the world where Starbucks does business, he told employees in a strongly worded note.

He added that the move was to make clear the company will neither stand by, nor stand silent, as the uncertainty around the new administration's actions grows with each passing day.

Schultz said the initial focus would be in the US and for refugees who had served as interpreters for the US military, but it is not yet clear when the five-year period would begin, or whether people would be employed directly by Starbucks or by suppliers. Schultz added that the Seattle-based company had also contacted employees who had been affected by the immigration ban.

Starbucks' move came as leading banks, car companies and technology firms voiced concern at the executive order.

Technology firms were the first to come out publicly against Trump's plans. Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, said that as an immigrant himself, he would continue to advocate on the issue. "As an immigrant and as a CEO, I've both experienced and seen the positive impact that immigration has on our company, for the country, and for the world" he wrote on LinkedIn, the business networking site owned by the group.

Microsoft's president, Brad Smith, said 76 employees had been affected by the 90-day ban on entry for citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

In an email to Microsoft staff, he said: "We believe that immigration laws can and should protect the public without sacrificing people's freedom of expression or religion. And we believe in the importance of protecting legitimate and law-abiding refugees whose very lives may be at stake in immigration proceedings."

On Sunday, Google co-founder Sergey Brin was photographed among people protesting at San Francisco international airport over the immigration measures. Brin said he was there in a personal capacity, but reportedly told one journalist: "I'm here because I'm a refugee."

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