



The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties supports the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it secures the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.

CRCL Releases FY 2013 Annual Report to Congress

CRCL recently released its [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2013 Annual Report to Congress](#) in accordance with 6 U.S.C. § 345 and 42 U.S.C. § 2000ee-1. The report details CRCL’s priorities and activities in FY 2013, which focused on alignment with the Department’s missions: Preventing Terrorism and Enhancing Security; Securing and Managing Our Borders; Enforcing and Administering Our Immigration Laws; Safeguarding and Securing Cyberspace; and Ensuring Resilience to Disasters.

DHS Commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

CRCL recently hosted a DHS-wide event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the passing of the landmark civil rights legislation that has provided a foundation of equality for all members of our society. DHS leaders from across the Department participated in a panel discussion on the challenges and triumphs of integrating and protecting civil rights at DHS in our post 9/11 world. CRCL Officer Megan Mack provided opening remarks. Program panelists included:

- Moderator: Veronica Venture, Deputy Officer and Director EEO and Diversity Programs, CRCL
- Kemble Garrett, Assistant General Counsel for Labor and Employment Law, Office of General Counsel
- Scott Lanum, Assistant Director for Diversity and Civil Rights, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Mariela Melero, Associate Director, Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Daniel Sutherland, Associate General Counsel, National Protection and Programs Directorate

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Civil Rights Act Anniversary Panelists from left to right: Kemble Garrett, OGC; Scott Lanum, ICE; Mariela Melero, USCIS; and Daniel Sutherland, NPPD

The program was well received and featured discussion on a variety of topics including how the government addressed and continues to address backlash against certain communities following the 9/11 attacks, how the Civil Rights Act impacts the day-to-day work of DHS personnel, and what role the Civil Rights Act had in shaping perceptions and career paths.

CRCL Responds to Surge of Unaccompanied Children at the Southwest Border

On behalf of the Department CRCL has undertaken efforts to address concerns related to the influx of families and unaccompanied children at the Southwest border. CRCL staff is participating in task forces that address heightened issues due to the surge, including accommodations for children with disabilities, and the standing up of new surge facilities.

Recently, CRCL staff visited the Nogales Processing Center in Arizona and observed Border Patrol agents addressing multiple issues under difficult circumstances, working together with representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Field Operations, ICE, USCIS, U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Public Health Service, the American Red Cross, and others who have volunteered to assist during the crisis.

Since January 2014 CRCL has received 184 allegations regarding the mistreatment of unaccompanied children in DHS custody. CRCL opened 53 of those allegations as complaints - 37 of which occurred in the Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Sector. The issues raised include the provision of adequate medical care, credible fear and human trafficking screening, hold room conditions, lack of meals and proper drinking water, separation of siblings in custody, and excessive use of force.

In mid-July, CRCL conducted a week-long onsite investigation covering eight Border Patrol stations in the Rio Grande Valley, along with reviews of the new McAllen Central Processing Center and the Hidalgo Port of Entry. With the onsite investigation now complete CRCL will follow up with CBP through our recommendation process on improvements regarding the treatment of unaccompanied children in CBP custody.

Pursuant to the law DHS must transfer unaccompanied children in the custody of CBP into the hands of HHS within 72 hours. The Department has released an [infographic](#) (above), both in English and Spanish, illustrating the interagency effort to address this situation.

CRCL Officer Hosts Women and Girls Listening Session in New York City

CRCL Officer Megan Mack recently traveled to New York City where she hosted a listening session on issues significant to women and girls. The meeting involved community stakeholders and local government officials who dialogued in small “breakout” groups on human trafficking, violence against women, immigration issues, and economic insecurity. As Secretary Johnson’s designee to the White House Council on Women and Girls, Officer Mack also held similar listening sessions in Minneapolis, Chicago, Los Angeles (led by Deputy Officer Veronica Venture), and will host one in Washington, DC this month.

Also while in NYC, Officer Mack was the guest speaker at the New York Police Department’s 12th annual pre-Ramadan luncheon. Her remarks highlighted CRCL’s work with diverse communities through roundtables and other engagement events. More than 500 religious and community leaders, precinct commanders, and members of the NYPD Muslim fraternal organizations were in attendance.

Unaccompanied Children at the Southwest Border

At the direction of the President, a Unified Coordination Group is leveraging Federal resources to address the humanitarian situation associated with the influx of unaccompanied children entering the U.S. across the southwest border. This chart depicts the general process to enhance capacity resulting from federal coordination.



* Note: This chart only shows interagency process to address the humanitarian situation.

DoD is providing temporary shelter to assist HHS including JB Lackland, NB Ventura County and Ft. Sill.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

CRCL Hosts CVE Exchange Program to Belgium

CRCL recently hosted a leg of its ongoing countering violent extremism (CVE)-focused community engagement exchange program between the cities of Columbus, Ohio and Vilvoorde, Belgium. This trip was an expansion of the exchange program CRCL has conducted with German officials over the past three years.



Participants of the CVE Exchange Program in Belgium

As part of the program U.S. stakeholders from Columbus met with the mayor of Vilvoorde and his team in the Belgian Parliament. The Columbus delegation included a school resource officer from the Hilliard (Ohio) Police Department, a community engagement specialist from the mayor's office in Columbus, a teacher who has worked with disaffected youth and created a number of programs in that field, and a youth activist and student leader who has spearheaded programs in youth empowerment.

The delegation engaged with local Belgian youth in an area of the city that is impacted by discrimination and high unemployment rates and a surge in youth leaving to support uprisings in Syria. Vilvoorde has a population of 42,000 and has had approximately 40 of its youth leave to fight in Syria with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), three of whom have become well-known ISIS commanders. The youngest known foreign fighter in Syria (age 13) is known to be a Belgian citizen.

As in Germany, the Belgian program is designed to help community stakeholders, educators, youth leaders, and local law enforcement exchange best practices that may benefit trust-building efforts, further the protection of civil rights and civil liberties, reduce alienation, and help build communities that are resilient and able to counter the narrative of Al-Qaeda and its supporters. Phase two of the program will take place later this year and will involve a delegation from Vilvoorde visiting Columbus for a week-long tour that CRCL will coordinate in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Brussels.

CRCL Hosts Engagement Event on World Refugee Day

CRCL recently participated in a World Refugee Day (June 20) event celebrating the honor, courage, and contributions of refugees resettling in Orange County, California. Over 1,000 attendees participated in the event which was organized by the Refugee Forum of Orange County (RFOC).



World Refugee Day event attendees

The program featured speeches, photography exhibits, essays, and mixed art. During the event, CRCL discussed its engagement efforts with diverse communities throughout the country, including Orange County, and how the Department seeks to deepen channels of communication between government and diverse communities.

The RFOC is a network of organizations who work with diverse refugees to assist with their successful resettlement in Orange County. According to the [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) 58,238 refugees entered the United States in 2012. Most flee out of fear of religious or political persecution, war, and violence.

CRCL on the Road, July

July 1 – Washington, DC

CRCL participated in an interagency meeting with diverse communities hosted by the Department of Justice.

July 29 – Washington, DC

CRCL Officer Megan Mack will host a local listening session for women and girls.

July 8 – Washington, DC

CRCL presented at a CVE workshop, Countering Violent Extremism through Peacebuilding Lens, hosted by Search for Common Ground.

July 30 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL will convene its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

Additional information, and contacting us

The goal of this periodic newsletter is to inform members of the public about the activities of the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, including: how to file complaints; ongoing and upcoming projects; opportunities to offer comments and feedback; etc. We distribute our newsletters via an email list and make them available to community groups for redistribution. We also post information pulled from the newsletter on a webpage, [CRCL at Work](#). If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, want to request back issues, or have other comments or questions, please let us know by emailing crcloutreach@dhs.gov.

If you are on this list, but no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please send an email to the same address asking us to unsubscribe you. For more information, including on how to make a civil rights or civil liberties complaint about DHS activities, see www.dhs.gov/crcl.

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