



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



DHS Celebrates 14 Years of Keeping America Safe

Message from Secretary John Kelly

Fourteen years ago, the Department of Homeland Security officially opened its doors, marking a new beginning in protecting America. The attacks of 9/11 taught us we needed to rethink our approach to national security; homeland security must be a top priority. By bringing together 22 agencies and offices into a single Department, we created a team of professionals and entities who could more closely unify our efforts to protect the American people and our nation.

We have seen many changes over the past fourteen years, both in the world and in DHS. We have grown more unified and have integrated our many law enforcement, security, and counterterrorism capabilities. Much has been accomplished in the first fourteen years. We will do much more in the years ahead, especially by focusing on our mission, enforcing the law, and investing in our workforce.

The constant through these dynamic and challenging times has been the people who make up our Department. You have remained steadfast and faithful to your unique duties and to our common oath of office. I thank each of you for your professionalism and the hard work you bring every day to your important jobs.

To those of you who have been part of our DHS family since March 1, 2003—thank you for choosing a life of public service, and for helping build DHS from its very foundation. To those of you who have joined us since or very recently—and I count myself among the ranks of recent arrivals—we have joined a proud and principled organization. As we celebrate our birthday, let us continue to protect the American people, our homeland, and our values with honor and integrity.

CRCL and USCIS Publish New Resource for Law Enforcement

CRCL and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently developed an overview of the U nonimmigrant status (U visa) and law enforcement’s role in the certification process: [U Visa Immigration Relief for Victims of Certain Crimes: An Overview for Law Enforcement](#). The U visa is for victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. This tool is intended to be a quick and convenient resource to address questions and concerns law enforcement might have about the U visa certification process.

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CRCL Convenes ICCT Call with Jewish and Muslim Communities

Earlier this month, CRCL activated an Incident Community Coordination Team (ICCT) call in response to recent violent incidents against Jewish and Muslim community centers, mosques, and synagogues across the United States. These incidents have included suspected hate crimes, acts of vandalism, and bomb threats against diverse communities. In the last several months, CRCL has heard from an increasing number of trusted community partners who have expressed concerns and requested information and resources from DHS.

A cross-section of more than 350 community and faith-based leaders, as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations, participated in the call. Speakers included CRCL Acting Officer Veronica Venture and other DHS leaders, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Tom Wheeler and other Department of Justice (DOJ) leaders, Chief Jeffrey Veltri of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Civil Rights Unit, and two representatives from the Jewish and Muslim community—Paul Goldenberg, president and CEO of Cardinal Point Strategies, and Salam Al-Marayati, president of the Muslim Public Affairs Council—who both serve on the Homeland Security Advisory Council and its Faith Based Advisory Committee.

All speakers condemned the recent incidents against diverse communities. The DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis reported having identified five waves of threats to Jewish community centers in 81 different locations across the country, and are working on intelligence products to address these threats. DHS National Protection and Programs Directorate shared information on their Protective Security Advisor program, which offers training and security assessments for communities to better protect themselves and their houses of worship.

The community representatives further noted that the Southern Poverty Law Center has tracked more than 1,000 incidents of violence against Jewish and Muslim communities since November 2016. They stressed the need for proactive training and emergency preparedness measures, as well as the continued need to build trust between communities and law enforcement. Following the speakers there was a Q&A period where several callers reiterated their support to help Jewish and Muslim communities address threats.

CRCL provides a list of DHS resources and training for communities and houses of worship, which can be found at: <https://www.dhs.gov/community-outreach-and-training>. For additional information and resources, contact CRCL's Community Engagement staff at communityengagement@hq.dhs.gov.

CRCL Participates in UNHRC Resolution 16/18 Workshop in Bulgaria

CRCL recently traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria to participate in a training workshop on best practices in community engagement in support of [UN Human Rights Council \(UNHRC\) Resolution 16/18](#). The Resolution focuses on positive measures countries can take to combat religious bias and intolerance that can restrict speech. Since 2012, CRCL has participated in six workshops abroad in support of the ongoing "Country-to-Country" program to implement UNHRC Resolution 16/18.

In Bulgaria, the workshop brought together government representatives, religious leaders, and members of civil society to discuss religious freedom, tolerance, and antidiscrimination. CRCL partnered with the DOJ's Civil Rights Division and the U.S. State Department to lead several trainings on best practices in community engagement covering the following topics: safeguarding religious freedoms in government security agencies, engaging religious minority communities for effective policy reform, and models for good governance.



DHS Recognizes Women’s History Month

CRCL, along with the Transportation Security Administration, hosted the Department’s annual event to commemorate Women’s History Month. This year’s theme, “*Honoring Trailblazing Women in Labor and Business*,” honors women who have successfully challenged traditional roles of women in business and the paid labor force.

The program began with opening remarks from CRCL Acting Officer Veronica Venture, who lauded women at DHS for being innovators, visionaries, and trailblazers in their support of the homeland security mission. She noted that women represent 32.5 percent of the DHS workforce, and that Department-wide women only comprise eight percent of law enforcement—which is under the national average of 15 percent. These statistics speak to the continued need for recruitment and retention of women at DHS and in homeland security-related fields.

The program’s keynote speaker, Lenora Peters Gant, Ph.D., currently serves as the senior advisor and executive intelligence strategist for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. As one of the nation’s leading experts on intelligence, national security, and human capital development, Dr. Gant’s career has spanned more than 25 years and several countries including Belgium, England, Italy, and Japan.

Dr. Gant followed with a historical presentation on women’s leadership—from the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 to the women’s movement for equality in the 1960s to present-day activism for equal pay and other labor-related issues. She highlighted such notable figures as Susan B. Anthony, Mary McCleod Bethune, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Michelle Obama, among others, for blazing trails for women that transformed our nation for the better. She noted, “When women succeed, our families succeed, and ultimately America succeeds.”



CRCL on the Road, March 2017

March 9 – Detroit, Michigan

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

March 10 – Minneapolis, Minnesota

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

March 13-17 – Sofia, Bulgaria

CRCL facilitated training on the UN Human Rights Council’s Resolution 16/18 Country-to-Country program.

March 20-22 – Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtables with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

March 21 – Houston, Texas

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

March 27-28 – Detroit, Michigan

CRCL hosted engagement meetings with DHS senior leaders and local community stakeholders.

March 28-29 – Boston, Massachusetts

CRCL hosted engagement meetings and a BRIDGES meeting with local community stakeholder.

CRCL on the Road Ahead, April 2017

Los Angeles: Quarterly roundtable, April 4-6

New York: Quarterly roundtable, April 21

Minneapolis: Community town hall, April 26-27

For more information on engagement events, email: communityengagement@hq.dhs.gov.

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 our stakeholder email list and make them available to community groups for redistribution. Issues of the newsletter can be accessed online at: www.dhs.gov/crcl-newsletter.

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. For more information, including how to make a civil rights or civil liberties complaint about DHS activities, visit: www.dhs.gov/crcl.

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