



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



### *A New Age for a New DHS*

On March 18, Secretary Kirstjen M. Nielsen delivered the 2019 State of Homeland Security Address, hosted by the Auburn University McCray Institute for Cyber and Critical Infrastructure Security and George Washington University. The Secretary offered her assessment of the ever-evolving security landscape, operational challenges, and a look forward at the Department’s forthcoming strategic plan to protect Americans, our values, and our way of life. McCray Institute Director Frank J. Cilluffo moderated a question-and-answer session with the Secretary following the remarks. In particular she highlighted the Department’s [major success over the past year](#). Watch [video](#) and read the [full transcript](#) of the Secretary’s address.

### **Secretary Nielsen Statement on New Zealand Mosque Shootings**

“In the wake of the attack on the two mosques in New Zealand, I want to express condolences and sympathies for those affected by the attacks, and reassure those in this country that the Department of Homeland Security is doing all it can to protect the homeland from violent extremists.

“While we are not aware of any current, credible or active threat domestically, nor of any current information regarding obvious ties between the perpetrators in New Zealand and anyone in the US— the Department is cognizant of the potential concerns members of Muslim-American communities may have as they gather at today’s congregational prayers.

“Communities with concerns should contact their local law enforcement agency, whom we are committed to supporting as they protect local mosques and reassure local community members.

“Additionally, please access and share with others who may be interested a [list of useful resources](#), as well as fact sheets on the Department’s [Hometown Security program](#) and [Security Assistance for Public Gatherings](#).

“Religious liberty is a hallmark of this country. Attacks on peaceful people in their place of worship are abhorrent and will not be tolerated. The Department strongly stands with those of all faiths as they seek to worship in peace, and we will continue to work with stakeholders to protect the ability of all to worship freely and without fear.

“We will continue to monitor the situation as the response to this tragedy unfolds and investigations continue. Thank you to the many community partners who work closely with the Department as we endeavor to keep our country safe from the threats we face.”

*\*NOTE: In response to community concerns in the aftermath of the New Zealand mosque attack, CRCL hosted an Incident Communication Coordination Team call with diverse community stakeholders, federal partners, and law enforcement on Wednesday, March 20, 2019. CRCL will continue to coordinate on these issues.*

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## **DHS Celebrates 16 Years of Securing the Homeland**

Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen joined with DHS employees to celebrate the Department's 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a special ceremony held at the main campus' chapel on Friday, March 1, 2019. Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen reminded attendees of the Department's origin and its history of success, stating, "We are a Department born out of September 11, 2001—a tragic day when our world changed forever. While our enemies and adversaries have continued to adapt in the years since, DHS stands ready to defend our citizens and our way of life against all threats."



## **CRCL Meets with Diverse Communities Along the Southern Border**

CRCL recently held meetings with diverse Southern border communities in Phoenix, Tucson, and Nogales, Arizona. These meetings also included non-governmental organizations and local law enforcement.

In Phoenix CRCL met with faith-based groups who regularly attend our community engagement roundtable. CRCL also met with the Phoenix Police Department on the coordination of hate crimes issues with newly arrived refugee communities.

In Tucson and Nogales, CRCL held meetings in follow-up to our December visit, and gave an update on what was reported to leadership since then. Community members discussed their concerns with access at the port of entry, including: vulnerable populations of asylum seekers, such as unaccompanied minors and transgender individuals, having access issues; Transportation Security Administration (TSA) questioning of travelers; and access to medical treatment and screening at ports of entry and border stations.

CRCL is working with local TSA and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to coordinate a meeting to address these concerns. In addition, CRCL will host roundtables in both Phoenix and Tucson in April where they will provide updates on these issues.

## **CRCL Hosts Seattle Roundtable with Diverse Communities**

This month CRCL held its quarterly roundtable in Seattle – the first roundtable held this year since the government reopened in January. The meeting was well-attended with regional leadership from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), CBP, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the U.S. Marshals Service.

CRCL presented the Law Enforcement Awareness briefing, which was well-received by attendees, and garnered significant interest from Congressional staffers who were present. Topics raised during the meeting included: alleged hate crimes targeting the Sikh communities; the watch listing process and extended delays in the CBP secondary screening at the Blaine port of entry; and information about consular services and protections for individuals traveling overseas; among others. CRCL is coordinating with local and state government, USCIS, and other federal partners to address and mitigate these concerns.



## **Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen Announcement on Temporary Protected Status for South Sudan**

Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen has announced her determination that an extension of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for South Sudan is warranted pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act. After carefully reviewing conditions in South Sudan with interagency partners, Secretary Nielsen determined the ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary and temporary conditions that support South Sudan's current designation for TPS continue to exist. Therefore, pursuant to the statute, she has extended South Sudan's TPS designation for 18 months. *Read the [full release](#).*

## **ICYMI: Blue Campaign Facebook Live Event**

Last month Polaris and ICE Homeland Security Investigations came together during a Blue Campaign Facebook Live broadcast to discuss what happens when you report human trafficking. Panelists covered what to expect when calling the National Human Trafficking Hotline, how tips are investigated, and how victims are supported in the process. Watch the full conversation here: <http://bit.ly/2BQ4dQH>.



## **USCIS Expands Fee Payment System Used in Field Offices**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently expanded the fee payment system used in field offices to 16 additional offices:

- Albuquerque, New Mexico;
- Buffalo, New York;
- Cincinnati, Ohio;
- Cleveland, Ohio;
- Columbus, Ohio;
- El Paso, Texas;
- Harlingen, Texas;
- Hartford, Connecticut;
- Indianapolis, Indiana;
- Jacksonville, Florida;
- Louisville, Kentucky;
- Mt. Laurel, New Jersey;
- Newark, New Jersey;
- Raleigh, North Carolina;
- Sacramento, California; and
- San Antonio, Texas.

[The fee payment changes](#) started in November 2018 with the Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and San Fernando Valley field offices. These changes have increased security and traceability of payments for applicants and reduced processing errors that caused USCIS to reject applications for non-payment. As of February 25, USCIS only accepts payments at the offices using the new system in the form of a:

- Personal check;
- Attorney check;
- Business check;
- Debit card;
- Credit card; or
- Reloadable prepaid credit or debit card.

Early results indicate that the update to the fee payment system reduced processing time by 88 percent and reduced the overall applicant service wait time by 75 percent while giving USCIS field officers greater capacity to complete their cases more quickly. *Read the [full release](#).*

## **CRCL on the Road, March**

### ***March 11 – Los Angeles, California***

CRCL held an engagement event with students at the University of Southern California.

### ***March 25-29 – Chicago, Illinois and Los Angeles, California***

CRCL conducted a State Department-sponsored city pair exchange program with a visiting delegation from the Ile-de-France region of France.

### ***March 12-15 – Los Angeles and San Diego, California***

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

### ***March 28-29 – New York City, New York***

CRCL convened 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 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.dhs.gov/crcl).

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