



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.



CRCL Hosts ICCT Calls in Response to Attacks on Houses of Worship

In the wake of recent attacks on houses of worship, both domestic and abroad, CRCL convened two Incident Community Coordination Team (ICCT) calls to share information on the federal government’s response, and hear stakeholders’ concerns. The calls were held in response to the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on April 21, and the shooting at a synagogue in California on April 27.

Both calls were held within days of the events and at the request of our stakeholders, resulting in hundreds of participants composed of community and faith-based leaders, law enforcement, advocacy groups, and members of civil society. Senior officials from DHS and other federal agencies spoke on the call, and reported the following:

DHS Office of Partnership and Engagement: discussed their initiatives to keep communities safe, such as the Active Shooter Preparedness program, and a number of other resources available to communities.

DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis: provided incident overviews, and addressed the various facets of security and integrity in today’s environment.

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency: discussed their training and technical assistance for communities on mass shootings, soft target hardening, and identifying security issues to infrastructure.

Federal Emergency Management Agency: shared information on the Non-Profit Security Grant program which provides more than \$70 million in grants annually to non-profit and faith-based institutions to protect infrastructure and houses of worship.

U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center: discussed the research and resources they provide to communities on mass shootings and preventing violent extremism.

Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: spoke on their work and resources to support communities in preventing and responding to violent hate crimes.

The ICCT call on Sri Lanka also included a representative from the U.S. State Department’s Office of Countering Violent Extremism, who provided information on the Smart Traveler program, a free service that allows citizens and nationals abroad to enroll their overseas trips with the U.S. embassy or consulate to receive information on safety conditions and assistance in emergencies. For the synagogue ICCT call, both the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Secure Communities Network shared their actions on the ground with local law enforcement and support for communities. [Read Acting Secretary McAleenan’s statement on the synagogue shooting in Poway, California.](#)

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CRCL Visits the Kingdom of Bahrain

CRCL recently supported the State Department in a visit with government officials from the Kingdom of Bahrain. CRCL met with the [Ministry of Interior](#) (our homeland security counterparts) and other agencies to exchange best practices on community engagement, community policing, and the role of civil society in building resilient communities.



Security and Resiliency of Houses of Worship and Faith-Based Organizations

Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin K. McAleenan met with the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) to discuss a range of homeland security issues and his priorities for the Department. The Acting Secretary then swore in two new members to the HSAC Robert Bonner and Leon Fresco.

“My vision for the HSAC, consistent with its charter, is to seek their strategic, organizationally independent, timely, specific, and actionable advice on a range of homeland security issues,” Acting Secretary McAleenan said. “I am pleased to appoint national thought leaders like Robert Bonner and Leon Fresco to the Council.”

During the public session, Acting Secretary McAleenan also announced [a new HSAC tasking that is focused on the security and resiliency of houses of worship and faith-based organizations](#) across the country.

“The right to practice our respective religions free from interference or fear is one of our nation’s most fundamental and indelible rights. That is why I have tasked HSAC with evaluating how DHS can work with houses of worship and faith-based groups to prevent and ensure protection from acts of violence. Worshipping free from fear is a basic and essential right we must defend and I look forward to receiving the committee’s critical feedback,” Acting Secretary McAleenan said. *Read more [here](#).*

Memorandum with Guatemala to Confront Migration and Combat Human Smuggling

Acting Secretary Kevin K. McAleenan has formalized an agreement between DHS and the Ministry of Government of Guatemala with the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC). The agreement, which will expand areas of collaboration between the United States and the Northern Triangle country to target human smuggling and trafficking networks, marked the start of the Acting Secretary’s four-day trip to participate in bilateral and multilateral meetings with officials representing the governments of the Northern Triangle countries. The meetings will highlight the root causes driving the current high rate of irregular migration to the U.S., as well as viable options for enhancing protections of vulnerable populations.

“I am proud to sign this agreement with Minister Enrique Antonio Degenhart,” said Acting Secretary McAleenan. “Through our continued collaboration and partnership, the U.S. and Guatemala are formalizing a number of initiatives to improve the lives and security of our respective citizens by combating human trafficking and the smuggling of illegal goods, helping to limit ‘push’ factors that encourage dangerous irregular migration to the U.S., perpetuating the ongoing crisis at or border.”

According to the MOC, both countries have agreed to take concrete actions necessary to combat the scourge of human trafficking and smuggling, interdict illicit drug trafficking, and target illegal trade and financial flows. This will include law enforcement training and collaboration to improve criminal investigations.

Other areas of cooperation include increasing the security of the Guatemalan border to stem the flow of irregular migration while ensuring proper preparation to improve the ability of both countries to identify and better understand their root causes. The Acting Secretary visited Guatemala at the end of the month to meet with officials representing Northern Triangle countries, leadership from non-governmental organizations, and Guatemalan civil society.

CRCL Hosts Engagement Meetings with U.S. Department of State in Minneapolis/St. Paul

This month, CRCL coordinated a trip for the U.S. Department of State's Principal Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism, at their request. The trip included a meeting with local community stakeholders, including civil rights and civil liberties advocates and law enforcement partners, and a host of meetings with community and faith-based leaders, federal partners, and other advocacy groups.

CRCL hosted a robust roundtable discussion with about 20 community stakeholders and others who expressed concerns with profiling and other issues. Additional meetings were held with the U.S. Attorneys' Office for the District of Minnesota, the Ramsey County Sheriff's office and Hennepin County Sheriff's office, and DHS grant recipient Heartland Democracy. CRCL will continue to coordinate with these stakeholders and groups as they work to rebuild regular community engagement in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

CRCL on the Road, May

May 20-24 – Portland, Oregon

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

May 23 – Denver, Colorado

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

May 23 – Minneapolis, Minnesota

CRCL coordinated multiple engagement meetings with the U.S. Department of State.

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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