



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.



New National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin

The Department of Homeland Security has issued a new NTAS Bulletin. Here is what is stated in the new bulletin's summary:

“Since the last NTAS Bulletin issued in June 2016, our basic assessment of the global threat environment has not changed. We remain concerned about homegrown violent extremists who could strike the homeland with little or no notice. Events since the last NTAS Bulletin reinforce this. Accordingly, increased public vigilance and awareness continue to be of utmost importance. This was, for example, a crucial component of the swift response to the September terrorist acts in New York City and New Jersey.”

The full weight of the U.S. government—including our military, intelligence, law enforcement and homeland security communities, along with our state and local law enforcement partners—is dedicated to detecting and defeating terrorism and protecting the homeland. This is our number one priority. In today's threat environment, which includes the prospect of homegrown violent extremism, the public has a role to play too. The NTAS Bulletin released today contributes to an informed public, and promotes their vigilance and awareness.

The new Bulletin has a duration of six months, and will expire on May 15, 2017. It is available in [multiple languages](#), including: English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

CRCL Hosts Quarterly Community Engagement Roundtable in Denver

CRCL Officer Megan Mack recently led our quarterly community engagement roundtable in Denver, where she welcomed participants and highlighted a number of CRCL's achievements over the past year. Acting U.S. Attorney Bob Troyer spoke on outreach and engagement activities that his office is leading, which include participation in the U.S. Department of Justice's Justice Forums that have been held across the country. These forums bring together local community leaders, youth advocates, law enforcement, and state and local officials to examine police-community issues in their respective cities and regions to seek solutions together. Also during the roundtable, a representative from the Colorado Refugees Service Program discussed refugee integration in Colorado, and the refugee screening process.

While in Denver, Officer Mack met with Sikh American community leaders to discuss a variety of issues including privacy concerns at local airports. She also met with community advocates to discuss a number of immigration concerns, including conditions of detention, language access at detention centers, and issues regarding Real ID.

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CRCL Engages with the Academic Community on Violence Against Women

CRCL recently hosted an interactive engagement event at the University of Southern California focused on violence against women and female genital mutilation. The event featured an expert on international domestic violence issues and an official from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, whose presentation highlighted issues faced by those who have experienced female genital mutilation, why it is a fast-growing problem domestically, particularly in the southern California region, and what the Department is doing to combat it.



Following the presentation, the attendees—comprised of both women and men—broke into groups and discussed three hypothetical scenarios concerning female genital mutilation, and how they would report an incident to DHS or other law enforcement while considering privacy of the victims, among other concerns. The feedback from these sessions will assist us in planning similar events at other campuses across the country.

DHS and its components are committed to combatting violence against women, and ensuring full compliance with the [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#). CRCL investigates complaints of alleged violations of VAWA confidentiality provisions and serves on the DHS Council on Combating Violence Against Women.

DHS Issues Faith-based Non-regulatory Guidance

DHS, along with eight other federal agencies, published a [final regulation](#) providing religious liberty protections for beneficiaries of federally funded social service programs, while also adding new protections for the ability of religious providers to compete for government funds on the same basis as any other private organization. The final regulations provide clear guidance to the organizations that participate in our social service programs, and protect beneficiaries of DHS social services programs including the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Citizenship and Integration Program Grant, and FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, FEMA Crisis Counseling, and FEMA Disaster Case Management.

In supplement to the regulation, DHS has released [guidance that addresses nondiscrimination requirements for recipients](#), which details related prohibitions and protections to ensure faith-based groups retain their religious identity. Further, DHS has provided model forms for notice of beneficiary rights and a beneficiary referral request. These forms are available in a format that can easily be adapted by organizations, and are in multiple languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

FEMA Launches Self-Evaluation to Improve Disability Access

FEMA formally launched a self-evaluation of its programs and activities to improve access by individuals with disabilities. The project was launched at an event that included FEMA and DHS officials, and several national stakeholder organizations. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate gave opening remarks and underscored his commitment to involve the disability community in its effort to ensure inclusivity in FEMA programs.

CRCL staff also gave an overview of the evaluation requirements and their support for the assessment. CRCL will support and coordinate with FEMA and all other DHS components as they conduct self-evaluations, in accordance with [DHS Management Directive 065-01](#), "Nondiscrimination for Individuals with Disabilities in DHS-Conducted Programs and Activities (Non-Employment)" and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

CRCL on the Road, November

November 10 – Chicago, Illinois

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

November 14-18 – Arnhem, Netherlands

CRCL participated in the first phase of a Department of State-sponsored community engagement exchange program with stakeholders from Tampa/Orlando, Florida.

November 16-18 – New York and New Jersey

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtables with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations, and also met with local mayors.

November 10 – Boston, Massachusetts

CRCL participated in an event focused on women, civil rights, and the global war on terror at Brandeis University.

November 16 – Seattle, Washington

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.

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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