



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.



Statement by Secretary Jeh C. Johnson on Family Residential Centers

ICE Director Saldaña and I understand the sensitive and unique nature of detaining families, and we are committed to continually evaluating it. We have concluded that we must make substantial changes to our detention practices when it comes to families.

Last summer we faced an unprecedented spike in illegal migration from Central America. A substantial part of that migration was adults who brought their children with them. In order to avoid a situation, after apprehension, in which we simply processed these individuals, escorted them to bus stations and released them, we increased our detention capacity.

We took a number of other steps in response to last summer's spike, working with our government counterparts in Mexico and Central America. This year the number of those apprehended at our southern border – an indicator of total attempts to cross the border illegally – while still high, is down considerably from before. Indeed, if the current trend this fiscal year continues, the annual number of total apprehensions at our southern border will be the lowest since the 1970s.

We continue to be vigilant in watching for any upswings in this migration pattern, and we know we must be prepared to respond in that event. We have also increased our capacity to focus our enforcement resources effectively on those who have recently crossed the border illegally, and on those who represent threats to public safety.

I and other DHS officials have conducted numerous visits to family residential centers. I personally visited the Karnes, Texas facility on Monday of last week. While there, I inspected the facility, the lodging, the dining area and the classrooms for children, and spoke directly and privately with the health providers. Most significant, I spoke with dozens of Central American mothers at the facility who came to this country illegally seeking a better life for their children and themselves.

I have reached the conclusion that we must make substantial changes in our detention practices with respect to families with children. In short, once a family has established eligibility for asylum or other relief under our laws, long-term detention is an inefficient use of our resources and should be discontinued.

Read Secretary Johnson's full statement [here](#).

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CRCL Engagement with Young Adults in Diverse Communities

Young adults (18 – 29 years of age) are a group that DHS frequently interacts with in fulfilling its many missions. Several DHS policies and programs have a disproportionately greater impact on this segment of the population as compared with the general public. As well, young adults are often more likely to be targeted for recruitment by extremist organizations.

In light of this, CRCL has expanded its outreach efforts to include regular engagement with college students and young adults. In recent years, these engagement events have taken place in major cities across the country – from Boston to Minneapolis to Los Angeles, including regular youth summits with certain diverse communities. Through these efforts, CRCL aims to deepen channels of communication while promoting greater integration, trust, and resilience among youth. In addition, CRCL has also shared CVE best practices with international partner countries (such as Belgium) that have significant young adult populations.



Secretary Johnson speaks to young adults in Pennsylvania.

This past month Secretary Johnson met with 40 student leaders from the Muslim Students Association, where he discussed the Department’s continued efforts to expand partnerships with community organizations and state and local officials to safeguard local communities, especially at schools and on college campuses. The Secretary also participated in a roundtable discussion with young adults at the Syrian American Cultural Club in Houston, where he underscored the importance of community engagement to effectively counter violent extremism.

2014 Environmental Justice Implementation Progress Report

DHS released its [Environmental Justice Strategy](#) in February 2012, which outlines its commitment to making environmental justice part of the homeland security mission, as required by Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (1994). The Department annually reports on its environmental justice efforts, particularly in the areas of: preventing terrorism and enhancing security, securing and managing our borders, and strengthening national preparedness and resilience.

The recently released [DHS Environmental Justice Implementation Progress Report for Fiscal Year 2014](#) highlights the agency’s activities and accomplishments in meeting the Environmental Justice Strategy. DHS is also a member of the [Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice](#) which was established to guide, support, and enhance federal environmental justice and community-based activities. CRCL co-leads the Department’s participation in the interagency working group, and also co-chairs the internal DHS Environmental Justice Working Group.

New IED/Active Shooter Guidance for First Responders

DHS, in coordination with the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice, and Transportation, has released “[First Responder Guidance for Improving Survivability in Improvised Explosive Device and/or Active Shooter Incidents](#).” The DHS Office of Health Affairs led this effort at the request of the National Security Council’s working group on improvised explosive device (IED) situations and in response to first responders who have encountered mass casualties from IEDs and/or active shooter incidents.

This first responder guidance provides evidence-based response strategies based on best practices and lessons learned from civilian and military IED and/or active shooter incidents. The recommendations presented—early, aggressive hemorrhage control; personal protective equipment (which includes ballistic vests, helmets, and eyewear); and greater first responder interoperability and incident management—will help to save lives by mitigating first responder risk and improving the emergent and immediate medical management of casualties encountered during IED and/or active shooter incidents. For more information on this new guidance, contact the DHS Office of Health Affairs at HealthAffairs@hq.dhs.gov.

CRCL on the Road, June

June 6 – Phoenix, Arizona

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

June 11 – Sterling, Virginia

CRCL hosted a meeting with Secretary Johnson and the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS).

June 23 – Chicago, Illinois

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

June 8 – Houston, Texas

CRCL convened community engagement meetings with Secretary Johnson and stakeholders, hosted by the Syrian American Cultural Club.

June 16 – Gaithersburg, Maryland

CRCL hosted a meeting with Secretary Johnson and the Montgomery County (MD) Executive's Faith Community Working Group.

June 25 – Atlanta, Georgia

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtables 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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