



Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Summary of CRCL's Recommendations and CBP's Response *Articles of Faith and Religious Meals in USBP Custody*

On February 7, 2024, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) responded to a *Recommendation Memorandum* issued in September 2023 by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) about the handling of articles of faith and the provision of religious meals for individuals in U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) custody. CBP concurred with three of CRCL's recommendations and partially concurred with two.

Background

Between August and October 2022, CRCL received three similar complaints from different sources, including Sikh organizations, alleging that CBP improperly removed turbans from Sikh individuals held in USBP custody in the Yuma Sector and failed to provide individuals with meals that met their religious dietary requirements.

Investigation

CRCL reviewed CBP records associated with four Sikh noncitizens whose turbans were allegedly removed by CBP and a Muslim noncitizen who was reportedly offered only meals containing pork. CRCL reviewed CBP policies and procedures related to religious accommodations and participated in discussions with several non-governmental organizations. During the investigation, CRCL also discussed these allegations with CBP and formed a collaborative working group with CBP to develop employee guidance providing background information and detailed direction relating to searches of Sikh turbans and other articles of faith.

CRCL's investigation found that CBP policy and guidance was insufficient to provide adequate instruction to USBP personnel related to the treatment of articles of faith during encounters with Sikh migrants. CRCL also concluded that USBP did not have a specific policy or plan to document requests for religious meals in its system of record or to ensure that meals meeting religious dietary requirements are available.

Recommendations

On September 15, 2023, CRCL sent CBP a *Recommendation Memorandum* with five recommendations regarding the treatment of articles of faith and the provision of religious meals for individuals in USBP custody. On February 7, 2024, CBP concurred with three recommendations and partially concurred with two.

CBP agreed to develop a religious accommodation policy, including guidance concerning religious headwear and religious dietary restrictions. CRCL agreed to create training for CBP to accompany the religious accommodation policy. CBP also agreed to develop a collection of resources on major religions for its staff to use.

CRCL provides the public with documents related to complaint investigations. After it has been prepared and reviewed, CRCL will post a redacted version of this Recommendation Memorandum on our [website](#) that will contain additional information about the complaint investigation and CRCL's findings and recommendations.

April 22, 2024