



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 Operations During COVID-19 Response

Per guidance from the [U.S. Office of Personnel Management](#) in response to COVID-19, CRCL is operating under telework flexibilities while continuing to serve and support the public. As a result, mail operations may be impacted and our response to mailed letters may be delayed. If you wish to file a complaint, the best method of submission at this time is via email to: CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov. CRCL staff will continue to monitor this email address, and our toll-free hotline for your questions at: 1-866-644-8360, TTY: 1-866-644-8361. For additional details on how to file a civil rights complaint, visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/file-civil-rights-complaint>.

CRCL Hosts Townhall with Secretary Mayorkas and AAPI Communities

Last month, CRCL hosted a townhall with Secretary Mayorkas and leaders of nearly 30 national AAPI non-profit and advocacy organizations, including the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, and many others in the Atlanta area.

Participants expressed their concerns with domestic terrorism prevention and community-based approaches, increased outreach and engagement on U-Visa, deportations of AAPI individuals, the recent wave of hate crimes against AAPI individuals, underrepresentation of AAPI individuals in government leadership, and the continued need for cultural competency training for schools and law enforcement.

Secretary Mayorkas reiterated the Department’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; its focus on addressing violent extremist ideology that can lead to hate crimes; and actions to further develop cultural sensitivity and competency training to aid in removing cultural barriers. CRCL is coordinating with DHS and other federal partners to address these concerns through enhanced engagement and policy oversight.

Secretary Extends NTAS Bulletin to May 15, 2021

On January 27, 2021 the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security issued a [National Terrorism Advisory System \(NTAS\) Bulletin](#), subsequently extended by the Secretary of Homeland Security, due to a heightened threat environment across the United States, which DHS believed would persist in the weeks following the successful Presidential

Inauguration. Information suggests that some ideologically-motivated violent extremists with objections to the exercise of governmental authority and the presidential transition, as well as other perceived grievances fueled by false narratives, could continue to mobilize to incite or commit violence. The expiration date for this Bulletin is extended from April 30, 2021 to May 15, 2021. [Subscribe to NTAS Advisories via Email](#)

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Secretary Mayorkas Announces Domestic Violent Extremism Review at DHS

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas [announced](#) an internal review to address the threat of domestic violent extremism within the Department. Secretary Mayorkas has made identifying, addressing, and preventing domestic violent extremism across our country a top priority.

“Domestic violent extremism poses the most lethal and persistent terrorism-related threat to our country today,” said Secretary Mayorkas. “As we work to safeguard our Nation, we must be vigilant in our efforts to identify and combat domestic violent extremism within both the broader community and our own organization. Hateful acts and violent extremism will not be tolerated within our Department.”

At the direction of the Secretary, a cross-Departmental working group comprised of senior officials will immediately begin a comprehensive review of how to best prevent, detect, and respond to threats related to domestic violent extremism within DHS. This internal team, which will be led by the Department’s Chief Security Officer, will produce a report with recommendations for the Secretary on how best to identify and respond to threats related to domestic violent extremism, including those based on racially- or ethnically-motivated violent extremism.

The Department’s internal review is the latest action it is taking to comprehensively combat domestic violent extremism. Since January 20, 2021, DHS has increased the development, production, and sharing of intelligence and other information central to countering domestic violent extremism across the United States, consistent with privacy, civil rights and civil liberties, and First Amendment rights. On January 27, 2021, DHS issued a [NTAS Bulletin](#) due to the heightened threat environment. It was the first NTAS issued in more than a year.

Further, in February, Secretary Mayorkas [designated combating domestic violent extremism a ‘National Priority Area’ for the first time](#) in FEMA grant programs. As a result, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments are required to spend at least 7.5 percent, or a minimum of \$77 million, of their DHS grant awards combating this threat. The Department is also increasing training opportunities for law enforcement partners, including through threat assessment and management programs related to domestic violent extremism.

More than 240,000 dedicated DHS employees carry out the Department’s mission to safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values. Today’s announcement is an important next step toward ensuring that violent extremism does not compromise our ability to keep our communities safe and secure.

Statement by Secretary Mayorkas on the Risk of Children Traveling with Smugglers

“The inhumane way smugglers abuse children while profiting off parents’ desperation is criminal and morally reprehensible. Just this month, a young girl died by drowning, a six-month-old was thrown into the river, and two young children were dropped from a wall and left in the desert alone. There can be no doubt that children are exceptionally vulnerable when placed in the hands of smugglers. There is grave risk they will be exploited and harmed. I applaud our heroic Border Patrol agents who have saved lives this week and every week, while putting their own lives at risk for the greater good of the country.”

(March 31, 2021)

Statement by Secretary Mayorkas on DACA

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas released the following statement announcing that DHS will issue a notice of proposed rulemaking to preserve and fortify DACA:

“We are taking action to preserve and fortify DACA. This is in keeping with the President’s memorandum. It is an important step, but only the passage of legislation can give full protection and a path to citizenship to the Dreamers who know the U.S. as their home.”

Statement by Secretary Mayorkas on the April 2nd Attack on the Capitol

“My thoughts and prayers go out to the family, friends, and colleagues of the U.S. Capitol Police Officer who lost his life today protecting the very symbol of our democracy. There is still much to be determined about this attack and DHS offers its full support to Capitol Police and DC Mayor Bowser.”

CRCL Hosts Stakeholder Listening Session on Migrant Protection Protocols

As part of their enhanced engagement efforts, CRCL recently launched a series of listening sessions to hear from communities along the southern border. The first session, held late last month, focused on the phase out of the [Migrant Protection Protocols \(MPP\) program](#), which was suspended on January 21, 2021. Under the new policy changes, asylum-seekers formerly in the MPP program will now be processed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) under health and welfare provisions outlined in Title 42 authorities.

CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González gave opening remarks, followed by DHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration Policy Adam Hunter who provided information on MPP and changes in immigration policy, and additional updates from the CBP Office of Field Operations. Participants then engaged in open discussion centered on parole procedures for individuals at the San Ysidro, Brownsville, and El Paso, Texas ports of entry, security concerns for individuals while they’re in Mexico, access to counsel, and identification of vulnerable populations. CRCL staff, along with CBP officials were on hand to address potential civil and human rights concerns and other questions raised.

DHS Announces Extension of REAL ID Full Enforcement Deadline

On April 27, 2021 Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas announced that DHS is extending the REAL ID full enforcement date by 19 months, from October 1, 2021 to May 3, 2023, due to circumstances resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has significantly impacted states’ ability to issue REAL ID-compliant driver’s licenses and identification cards, with many driver’s licensing agencies still operating at limited capacity. DHS will publish an interim final rule in the coming days to effectuate this enforcement date change.



“Protecting the health, safety, and security of our communities is our top priority,” said Secretary Mayorkas. “As our country continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, extending the REAL ID full enforcement deadline will give states needed time to reopen their driver’s licensing operations and ensure their residents can obtain a REAL ID-compliant license or identification card.”

Beginning May 3, 2023, every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID-compliant driver’s license or identification card, state-issued enhanced driver’s license, or another TSA-acceptable form of identification at airport security checkpoints for domestic air travel.

All 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and four of five U.S. territories covered by the REAL ID Act and related regulations are now compliant with REAL ID security standards and are issuing REAL ID-compliant driver’s licenses and identification cards. However, many state licensing agencies have extended the deadline for renewing expiring licenses due to a widespread shift to appointment-only scheduling protocols during the pandemic that has significantly limited states’ capacity to issue REAL ID-compliant driver’s licenses and identification cards. As a result, only 43 percent of all state-issued driver’s licenses and identification cards are currently REAL ID-compliant. DHS and various states also need time to implement requirements mandated by the REAL ID Modernization Act, including changes that will streamline processing by allowing the electronic submission of certain documents.

DHS continues to work closely with all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories to implement REAL ID Act requirements. For more information on REAL ID, visit www.dhs.gov/real-id.

CRCL on the Road

*Following guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to exercise social distancing, our Community Engagement team will continue to carry out our mission using various virtual and telephonic tools during this national public health emergency. While our team maintains constant communication with federal, state, local, and civil society stakeholders across the country, we encourage anyone who needs to contact us to do so via email to: CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding during this time.

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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