



*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.*



### **Statement by Secretary Jeh C. Johnson on Reforms to Residential Family Centers**

Last summer, this Department took a number of steps to respond to an unprecedented influx in illegal migration from Central America. Many of those apprehended at the border were adults who brought their children with them. In response to this influx, we increased our family residential center capacity. We recognize, however, the special concerns involved in detaining families with children. And over the past several months, we have implemented significant reforms to how we operate our family residential centers. We are also engaging with stakeholders to listen and discuss their concerns, and will continue to make additional improvements when appropriate. We have established a Federal Advisory Committee with experts in mental health, family and youth services, and other areas to advise on our policies going forward.

With these reforms, the detention of families is becoming short-term in most cases. We are transitioning our family residential center facilities into processing centers where individuals can be interviewed and screened rather than detained for a prolonged period of time. Families who establish a credible or reasonable fear of persecution in their home countries are now being released after asserting their claim, under conditions designed to ensure they will appear in immigration court for their case. The Department will also continue to expedite, to the greatest extent possible, the removal of those who are not eligible for relief under our laws. We take seriously our obligation to secure our borders and will continue our aggressive enforcement of our nation's immigration laws.

Finally, we are taking steps to ensure compliance with the July 24 and August 21 orders issued by the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, which hold that a 1997 settlement agreement requires us to implement new detention policies. We disagree with portions of the legal reasoning in the decision and have filed a notice of appeal preserving our ability to challenge those portions. But we remain committed to reforming our family residential center policies, as we have been doing for the past several months. ([September 18, 2015](#))

### **CRCL Hosts Engagement Events in Minneapolis**

CRCL recently facilitated a series of community engagement events in Minneapolis, which is home to the largest Somali American community in the country. The meetings brought together DHS senior leadership and a host of federal partners, local law enforcement, and advocacy groups to dialogue with the community.

CRCL, in partnership with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), co-hosted a public town hall to address travel concerns. TSA Assistant Administrator Kimberly Walton led a discussion on risk-based screening and redress procedures and TSA travel programs. A TSA Mobile Redress Team was also onsite to assist individuals with filing complaints via [DHS TRIP](#) and other complaints avenues.

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Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas joined Officer Megan Mack for CRCL’s quarterly roundtable, where he spoke about the Department’s commitment to expand partnerships and build trust with community organizations and state and local officials to safeguard local communities. Also in attendance were representatives from TSA, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the St. Paul and Minneapolis Police Departments, the Somali Chamber of Commerce, Somali Action Alliance, and several nonprofit organizations.



These meetings were held as a part of enhanced engagement in Minneapolis and to fulfill Secretary Jeh Johnson’s commitment to the community made during his last visit to Minneapolis in November 2014. In addition to its quarterly roundtable, CRCL also regularly engages with Somali American women and youth in Minneapolis to hear their specific concerns.

## **National Preparedness Month**

***Don’t Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.***

September is [National Preparedness Month](#), and [Ready.gov](#) offers steps for you to take action now to prepare for all types of emergencies: flood, wildfire, hurricane, power outage, and more. Here’s how:

- [Make a plan](#) with your community, your family, and for your pets.
- Plan how to stay safe and communicate during the disasters that can affect your community.
- Participate in America’s PrepareAthon! [National PrepareAthon! Day](#), which culminates National Preparedness Month on September 30.



## **CRCL Meets with Indigenous Guatemalan Leaders**

CRCL recently met with a group of indigenous leaders from Guatemala’s Western Highlands, who were visiting the U.S. for meetings with the Department of State in Washington, D.C. and across the country. Staff gave an overview of CRCL’s work, including our role in leading the Department’s language access efforts and providing language services for speakers of indigenous Guatemalan languages. They also discussed U.S. immigration policy and CRCL’s contributions to related DHS policy.



## **CRCL on the Road, September**

### ***September 13 - 15 – Minneapolis, Minnesota***

CRCL hosted a series of engagement meetings with diverse community stakeholders.

### ***September 22 – Glynco, Georgia***

CRCL delivered the community awareness briefing at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

### ***September 17 – Tampa, Florida***

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

### ***September 24 – Memphis, Tennessee***

CRCL hosted a public town hall with diverse community stakeholders.

## **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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.dhs.gov/crcl).

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