



2016 Year-End Summary of the U.S. Universal Periodic Review Working Groups

Introduction

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was established by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2006 as a process through which the human rights record of every UN Member State is peer-reviewed. This review, conducted through the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), is based upon each country's human rights obligations and commitments in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights instruments to which the country is party, and other sources. During the process, the country under review submits a written report on its human rights record, and appears before the Council where it receives recommendations regarding its human rights record from other UN Member States. The country under review is able to "accept" or "note" these recommendations, and those accepted form the basis for future reporting.

The United States is a strong supporter of the UPR process, which provides a unique mechanism for the global community to discuss human rights issues around the world. It is the only process through which all UN Member States undergo review and scrutiny of their human rights records. The United States completed its first UPR cycle in 2010 and submitted its second UPR report in February 2015, making a presentation on that report to the HRC in May 2015. The second UPR report and presentation focused on the recommendations accepted by the United States during the first UPR cycle, as well as updates on issues related to domestic implementation of human rights obligations and commitments.

The United States received a total of 343 recommendations from other UN Member States during its second UPR cycle, the most in UPR history. In September 2015, the United States announced that it had accepted, in whole or in part, 260 of those recommendations, or approximately 75 percent. Documentation for the United States' second UPR cycle – including the U.S. report, the Report of the HRC listing UN Member States' recommendations, and an Addendum providing the U.S. response to those recommendations – is available [here](#).

Each country is responsible for developing appropriate mechanisms for follow-up on the UPR recommendations it accepts. To this end, the U.S. Government organized six interagency UPR Working Groups based on the topics covered by the UPR recommendations that the United States accepted. Each Working Group is made up of representatives from relevant federal departments and agencies with authorities related to the group's mandate. The Working Groups are:

- **Working Group 1: Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination** led by the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division



- **Working Group 2: Criminal Justice** led by the U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division
- **Working Group 3: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Indigenous Issues, and the Environment** co-led by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of the Interior
- **Working Group 4: National Security** co-led by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- **Working Group 5: Immigration, Labor, Trafficking, Migrants, and Children** co-led by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Labor
- **Working Group 6: Domestic Implementation and International Treaties and Mechanisms** led by the U.S. Department of State

The UPR Working Groups have both an internal coordination and a public outreach role. Each Working Group meets internally to identify and discuss proposals responsive to accepted UPR recommendations, identify opportunities for interagency collaboration, share best practices on cross-cutting issues, and discuss public engagement. In addition to UPR recommendations, the Working Groups also consider relevant recommendations received from the UN committees of experts established under the international human rights treaties or protocols to which the United States is a party. These include the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Committee Against Torture, and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. More information about these treaties and protocols, the U.S. reports under these treaties and protocols, and recommendations received from these committees of experts, are available [here](#). From 2013-2015, the United States received more than 600 recommendations from UN human rights treaty bodies and through the UPR process.

The UPR Working Groups also hold periodic civil society consultations to receive input and provide updates on progress toward implementation of accepted UPR, and treaty body recommendations as appropriate. Each Working Group is anticipated to hold at least two such consultations between the issuance of the second and third U.S. reports, the latter of which will be due in early 2020. Individual departments and agencies that are members of the Working Groups may also hold other consultations related to a specific subset of recommendations that fall within their responsibilities. Members of civil society, state, local, and tribal government officials, and members of the public are welcome to attend these consultations and provide input on U.S. implementation of relevant UPR and treaty body recommendations. Members of the public can also submit comments to the Working Groups online by emailing UPR2015@state.gov.

This Summary provides an informal overview of some of the activities of the six Working Groups since the last U.S. submission as part of its UPR cycle in September 2015, as well as an



update on selected U.S. Government activities related to the recommendations and to promoting and protecting human rights during this same period.

I. Civil Society Engagement on UPR and Related Human Rights Issues

Each of the six UPR Working Groups hosted civil society consultations dedicated to the UPR recommendations and related human rights treaty body recommendations during 2016.

On April 27, 2016, Working Group 6 held a consultation to discuss UPR recommendations and related human rights treaty body recommendations, which included interactive discussions in three sessions on treaties, domestic implementation of human rights obligations and commitments, and international mechanisms. More than 40 U.S. Government, state and local government, and civil society representatives participated, including representatives of the Departments of State (DOS), Justice (DOJ), and Education (ED), and the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States. Representatives of state and local governments, including the Office of the Governor of New York and the Council of State Governments, participated in person and by phone.

On June 9, 2016, Working Group 4 held a consultation with civil society on national security issues in the UPR and human rights treaty body recommendations. Sessions covered issues including privacy and surveillance, detainee treatment and accountability, Guantanamo Bay, and other issues related to armed conflict. More than 50 U.S. Government and civil society representatives participated, including government participants from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), DOS, DOJ, and the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Homeland Security (DHS).

On August 1, 2016, Working Group 2 held a civil society consultation on UPR and human rights treaty body recommendations related to criminal justice. The consultation was attended, in person and by phone, by approximately 60 members of civil society and representatives of various federal government departments and agencies, including DOS, DHS, and DOJ (the latter including representatives of 11 different components). Representatives from approximately 40 state and local governments were also invited.

On August 4, 2016, on behalf of Working Group 1, DOJ and DHS held a half-day civil society consultation on UPR and human rights treaty body recommendations related to civil rights and non-discrimination in the context of law enforcement. Discussion centered on hate crimes, strengthening police-community relations, excessive force, and consideration of race and ethnicity by law enforcement. Approximately 25 civil society representatives, participating in person and by teleconference, joined a similar number of federal agency representatives for a moderated, interactive discussion.

On August 17, 2016, Working Group 3 held a full-day civil society consultation specifically on the UPR and human rights treaty body recommendations it covers, along with the non-law



enforcement-related recommendations covered by Working Group 1. It included panels on discrimination issues, environmental issues, indigenous peoples' issues, and economic, social, and cultural rights, and representatives of ten federal agencies participated. More than 20 tribal representatives and non-governmental organizations attended, either in-person or through video and telephone conferencing.

On September 15, 2016, Working Group 5 held a consultation on the UPR and human rights treaty body recommendations related to immigration, trafficking, labor, and children. Approximately nine federal agencies participated, along with more than 45 members of civil society. Participants discussed a wide range of issues, including accountability for inappropriate use of force and family detention, ensuring justice for migrant workers, gender equality, discrimination, and combatting human trafficking.

In addition, departments and agencies represented within the Working Groups addressed issues related to human rights and issues covered by the UPR recommendations in several other engagements with civil society. These included the following:

Community Policing Tour: Beginning in 2015, the Attorney General conducted a national Community Policing Tour to build on President Obama's commitment to engage with law enforcement and other members of the community to implement key recommendations from the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing final report. The Community Policing Tour visited 12 jurisdictions in two phases. Phase I focused on jurisdictions with established community policing challenges that were making strong efforts at improvement and innovation. Phase II was focused on recommendations from the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, whose final report was organized around six pillars. Between September 2015 and December 2016, the Attorney General visited Richmond, California; Miami/Doral, Florida; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Los Angeles, California, with each site focusing on a particular pillar of the report.

Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement: In October 2016, DOJ and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released a [comprehensive report](#) that examines barriers and promising practices – in recruitment, hiring, and retention – for advancing diversity in law enforcement. In drafting the report, DOJ and EEOC engaged with dozens of law enforcement leaders, officials, and officers; researchers; civil rights advocates and other experts, including at two all-day listening sessions. Following release of the report, DOJ and EEOC continued to engage with law enforcement and community leaders by partnering with U.S. Attorneys around the country to host "Diversity Dialogues" in Madison, Wisconsin; Savannah, Georgia; Wichita, Kansas; and San Francisco, California to facilitate discussions about how to implement some of the promising practices identified in the report.

Combatting Religious Discrimination Today: In July 2016, DOJ published its [final report](#) from Combatting Religious Discrimination Today, an interagency community engagement initiative



launched earlier in 2016 to promote religious freedom, challenge religious discrimination, and enhance enforcement of laws prohibiting religion-based hate crimes. From March-June 2016, the interagency initiative held seven roundtables in six cities to learn firsthand about religious discrimination and solicit feedback from diverse faith leaders, civil rights advocates, and community members about how the federal government can address these issues. The final report provides an overview of the themes and concerns expressed at the roundtables in four areas: religious discrimination and religion-based bullying and harassment in education, religious discrimination and accommodation in employment, hate crimes and protection of places of worship, and protection of religious communities building places of worship and religious schools free from unlawful interference.

White House Tribal Nations Conference and White House Tribal Youth Gathering: On September 26, 2016, the White House hosted its [8th annual Tribal Nations Conference](#). At the conference, the President and members of his Cabinet discussed a range of issues important to tribal leaders, with an emphasis on ways the federal government can continue to strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship and ensure that progress in Indian Country endures. In addition, on September 27, 2016, as part of the Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative, the White House Tribal Youth Gathering brought together 100 Native youth leaders to participate alongside tribal leaders and senior federal leaders in breakout sessions, panels, and youth-specific programming to address the most pressing needs facing their communities. Through youth engagement and strategic investments and policies, Gen-I has helped cultivate a new generation of tribal leaders and improve the lives of Native youth.

Engagement with Tribes on Decision-Making for Infrastructure Projects: Beginning in September 2016, the federal government has been conducting tribal consultations to identify opportunities for improving [engagement with tribes on decision-making for infrastructure projects](#).

National Tribal Consultations: Since 2015, dozens of [national tribal consultations](#) on a range of subjects were held to facilitate engagement on issues of importance to tribes, including child welfare, Indian sacred sites or plants used for traditional purposes on federal lands, funding for tribally-controlled colleges and universities, and international repatriation, among others.

Engagement on the National Drinking Water Action Plan: In 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hosted several engagements and civil society consultations with a variety of stakeholders, including states, tribes, local governments, drinking water utilities, and public health, environment, and community organizations to help inform the development of the [National Drinking Water Action Plan](#).

II. Selected Developments in Promoting Human Rights and Issues Related to the UPR Recommendations



Since September 2015, there have been many positive developments in the United States relating to domestic human rights protections. Below are summaries of some of these key developments, which relate to UPR and/or human rights treaty body recommendations received and under review by the Working Groups.

Reducing Overcrowding and Improving Conditions in Federal Prisons: In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the federal inmate population decreased by nearly 8,500 inmates, and in FY 2016 the population declined by another 13,500 inmates. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is enhancing prison conditions by expanding inmate programs that are proven to reduce recidivism. These programs include its Residential Drug Abuse Treatment Program, its education programming, and occupational and vocational training programs, including working to open a new integrated treatment community for female inmates that includes both drug and mental health treatment. The United States also has placed an increased emphasis on inmate interactions with their families in federal prisons to improve quality of life. For example, programs like Daddy-Daughter Dances and Mommy and Me Teas help maintain and strengthen bonds between the inmate parents and their children. In FY 2016, BOP conducted more than 400 events in which more than 9,000 inmates and 14,000 children participated.

Improving Access to Voting for American Indians and Alaska Natives: In 2015, following formal consultations with Indian tribes, DOJ formally proposed [legislation](#) that would require states or localities whose territory includes part or all of an Indian reservation, an Alaska Native village, or other tribal lands to locate at least one polling place in a venue selected by the tribal government.

Promoting Equal Pay: In September 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) [issued a final rule](#) prohibiting contractors and subcontractors from discharging or otherwise discriminating against job applicants or employees because they inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their pay or that of others, subject to certain limitations. This makes it possible for workers and job applicants to share information about their pay without fear of discrimination, and helps them discover whether they may be victims of pay discrimination. Furthermore, in September 2016, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [approved changes](#) to allow EEOC and DOL to collect summary pay data from certain covered employers, including federal contractors, which will improve the federal government's ability to identify pay disparities at the early stages of an investigation, and also will assist employers with identifying possible pay issues in their workforces.

Advancing Economic Opportunity by Ensuring Equal Access to Credit: In September 2015, DOJ and the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) filed a joint complaint and proposed consent order involving Hudson City Savings Bank alleging a pattern or practice of redlining throughout its major market areas in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. The bank's \$25 million loan subsidy fund to increase the amount of credit the bank extends to formerly redlined neighborhoods across Hudson City's market areas and \$2.25



million investment for advertising, outreach, financial education, and community partnership is the [largest residential mortgage redlining settlement](#) in DOJ's history.

Hosting Visits of UN Human Rights Mandate Holders: Since our last UPR appearance in September 2015, the United States has hosted five official visits from UN human rights mandate holders: the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the UN Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The United States has committed to host three more visits in 2017, from the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy.

Reducing Life Imprisonment Without Parole: DOJ has been advocating for federal legislation to eliminate life-without-parole sentences for juveniles in the federal criminal justice system. On October 22, 2015, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee passed out of Committee, by a vote of 15 yeas to 5 nays, the [Sentencing and Corrections Reform Act](#), which contains such a provision.

Bringing Sex Traffickers to Justice: In November 2015, and again in October 2016, U.S. and Mexican authorities conducted coordinated, simultaneous enforcement actions on both sides of the border to apprehend members of transnational sex trafficking enterprises. These actions have resulted in multiple human trafficking prosecutions under U.S. and Mexican law, and the recovery of multiple trafficking victims and their children.

Training to Protect Migrant Workers: On November 10, 2015, EEOC and the Republic of Ecuador signed a Memorandum of Understanding creating a partnership between local consulates and EEOC field offices for EEOC to train consular staff on workers' and employers' rights and responsibilities in the United States, so that the Government of Ecuador can help inform their nationals employed in the United States. In FY 2016, EEOC conducted 1,444 events, reaching 56,063 persons from migrant farm worker communities and their advocates, providing education and information about discrimination.

Implementing Interrogation Safeguards: On November 25, 2015, the President signed the [National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2016 \(2016 NDAA\)](#), which includes provisions codifying key interrogation-related reforms into U.S. law. Specifically, it codifies the requirement that an individual in the custody or under the effective control of an officer, employee, or other agent of the U.S. Government, or detained within a facility owned, operated, or controlled by a U.S. department or agency, in any armed conflict, may not be subjected to any interrogation technique or approach, or any treatment related to interrogation, that is not authorized by and listed in the [Army Field Manual 2-22.3](#). The 2016 NDAA also imposes new legal requirements, including that the Army Field Manual remain publicly available, and that any revisions be made publicly available 30 days in advance of taking effect.



Respecting Privacy and Prohibiting Bulk Collection: On November 29, 2015, the provisions of the [USA FREEDOM Act](#) took effect prohibiting bulk collection of any records – including of non-U.S. persons – pursuant to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) authorities or through the use of National Security Letters, ending the U.S. Government’s ability to collect telephone metadata records in bulk under Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act. The law also requires the Executive Branch to disclose annually the number of FISA orders and certifications sought and approved and to provide estimates of the number of U.S. persons and non-U.S. persons targeted and affected by surveillance. The law also authorizes companies that have received FISA orders or other national security demands for data to publish certain aggregate data concerning the process they receive.

Preventing Discrimination and Bias in Policing: In December 2015, DOJ announced new [guidance](#) to help law enforcement agencies prevent gender bias in their response to sexual assault and domestic violence, focusing on the need for clear policies, robust training, and responsive accountability systems. In 2016, DOJ announced [findings of a reasonable cause](#) to believe that the Baltimore City Police Department engages in a pattern or practice of conduct that violates the First and Fourth Amendments of the Constitution as well as federal anti-discrimination laws, and reached agreements with the cities of [Ferguson, Missouri](#), and [Newark, New Jersey](#) to remedy unconstitutional law enforcement conduct and bring wide-ranging reforms and changes to those police departments, and in Ferguson, to the municipal court.

Protecting the Rights of Workers: In December 2015, EEOC released [resource documents](#) for employees and employers that focused on discrimination against people who are or are perceived to be Muslim or Middle Eastern. That same month, EEOC negotiated a [\\$5 million settlement](#) for claims against Signal International, LLC. The claims alleged that Signal International had subjected 476 Indian employees to inhumane conditions and exploitation and a hostile work environment based on national origin (Indian) and/or race (Asian). In April 2016, [EEOC resolved a claim](#) of sexual harassment of and retaliation against migrant farm workers by County Fair Farm in a consent decree requiring the farm to pay the workers \$120,000, to provide training to workers on preventing sexual harassment, and to post anti-discrimination statements in both English and Spanish. The employer also agreed to stop employing the alleged perpetrators of the discrimination and retaliation. And in May 2016, [EEOC obtained a court order](#) requiring Global Horizons, Inc., to pay \$7.6 million to 67 Thai farmworkers in the state of Washington due to a hostile work environment, harassment, and discrimination in violation of federal anti-discrimination laws.

Protecting and Strengthening Equal Access to Educational Opportunity: In December 2015, ED issued [guidance](#) to school districts, colleges, and universities on protecting students against discrimination or harassment based on their actual or perceived race, religion, or national origin. In 2016, in addition to significant enforcement actions and several other developments, ED issued [guidance](#) to help ensure equity and provide behavioral supports to students with disabilities and, in conjunction with the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention, hosted a day-long summit on preventing bullying. And, in May 2016, following a five-decade-long legal



battle to desegregate schools in Cleveland, Mississippi, [a federal court ordered](#) the Cleveland School District to consolidate its secondary schools.

Prosecuting Religion-based Hate Crimes: Between late 2015 and 2016, DOJ obtained convictions for a Connecticut man for [firing a high-powered rifle at a mosque](#); a Florida man for [threatening to firebomb](#) two mosques and shoot their congregants; a former Missouri man for [participating in a conspiracy](#) to oppress, threaten, and intimidate worshippers at the Islamic Center of Springfield, Missouri; a Missouri man for the [arson](#) of a local mosque and two attempted arsons of a Planned Parenthood clinic; and a North Carolina man for [using force](#) against a Muslim woman to obstruct her free exercise of religion on an airplane.

Fighting Homelessness: The [2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress](#) compiled by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that 549,928 persons experienced homelessness on a single night in 2016, a decline of 14 percent since 2010. Over this seven-year period, HUD estimates the nation experienced a 23 percent reduction among homeless families, a 47 percent drop in Veteran homelessness, and a 27 percent decline in individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

Moving Toward Greater Paid Family Leave: In 2016, the DOL Women's Bureau awarded \$1.1 million to six recipients under its [Paid Leave Analysis Grant Program](#) to study the feasibility of developing and expanding paid family and medical leave programs in the United States. The grant program funds [research and analysis](#) to develop and implement paid family and medical leave programs at the state and municipal levels.

Training to Combat Human Trafficking: In FY 2016, the [DHS Blue Campaign](#) and its partners trained more than 2,100 individuals, including law enforcement, first responders, and others, to better combat human trafficking, and created new public awareness materials for broader audiences in multiple languages. In FY 2016, DOJ committed more than \$49 million in grant funding to combat human trafficking, including more than \$15.8 million to support 11 anti-human trafficking task forces and more than \$20 million to 34 victim service providers providing a range of comprehensive or specialized victim services. In addition, in FY 2016, EEOC conducted 183 outreach events focused on human trafficking issues in partnership with community-based organizations, reaching 12,146 people. In 2016, ED held trainings for school district superintendents, principals, teachers and staff, school social workers, students, and others. And, since October 2015, all new Immigration Judges receive training on recognizing victims of domestic violence and trafficking.

Working Toward the Closure of the Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility: In FY 2016, the Executive Branch continued its efforts to reduce the population of detainees at Guantanamo Bay while ensuring that each individual held there is treated humanely. Since September 2015, 59 detainees have been transferred out of Guantanamo.



Protecting Children from Exploitation: In 2016, DOJ issued its second [National Strategy on Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction](#), and the U.S. Attorney General will be engaging the U.S. Attorney community and asking each to implement an action plan within their districts.

Combatting Gun Violence: In January 2016, the President took several executive actions to ensure that all gun dealers are licensed and run background checks, to strengthen the background check system and to propose new funding to increase access to mental health care. The DOJ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives issued [guidance](#) clarifying when a person buying and selling firearms must be licensed under federal law and conduct background checks, and [finalized a rule](#) to require background checks for people seeking to buy some of the most dangerous weapons and other items through a trust, corporation, or other legal entity.

Adopting Recommendations on Solitary Confinement: In January 2016, DOJ issued its [report and recommendations](#) regarding “restrictive housing,” including solitary confinement, in U.S. prisons. The President subsequently [announced](#) that he was adopting the report’s recommendations to reform the federal prison system, including by banning solitary confinement for juveniles and, as a response to low-level infractions, by expanding treatment for mentally ill inmates, and by increasing the amount of time that inmates in solitary confinement can spend outside their cells.

Improving Consultations with Native American Tribes: On February 19, 2016, EPA released its [Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes: Guidance for Discussing Tribal Treaty Rights](#). This Policy outlines steps EPA must take during tribal consultations when an EPA action may affect a resource-based tribal treaty right, or an environmental condition necessary to support the resource.

Institutionalizing Transparency in the Intelligence Community (IC): In April 2016, ODNI formalized the permanent IC Transparency Council to continue implementation of the [Principles of Intelligence Transparency](#) (released in October 2015), which provide guidance to the IC on being more transparent with the public while protecting the sources and methods necessary for performing its national security mission. The Council is responsible for ensuring that transparency is a comprehensive and sustainable practice within the IC.

Increasing Engagement with State and Local Government Officials: The U.S. Government has continued to work to increase state and local government participation in civil society consultations and in the UPR process. For example, DOS representatives spoke at the Human Rights Cities conference in Washington, D.C. on May 26, 2016, along with representatives from HUD and EEOC. In September 2016, DOS published [a feature in the newsletter of the Council of State Governments](#) to raise awareness about human rights and the UPR.

Addressing Civilian Casualties in U.S. Use of Force Operations: On July 1, 2016, the President promulgated an [Executive Order on United States Policy on Pre- and Post-Strike Measures to Address Civilian Casualties in U.S. Operations Involving the Use of Force](#), and released



[aggregate data](#) regarding both (1) the number of strikes undertaken by the U.S. Government against terrorist targets located outside areas of active hostilities between January 20, 2009 and December 31, 2015, and (2) the range of assessed combatant and non-combatant deaths resulting from those strikes. The Executive Order requires annual public release of such data and is aimed at increasing transparency regarding civilian casualties.

Protecting Religious Communities and their Places of Worship: In July 2016, DOJ released a [report](#) outlining its increased enforcement of the land use protections in the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), which protects religious communities from discriminatory or unjustifiably burdensome application of zoning laws against places of worship, religious schools, and other uses of land for religious purposes. In September 2016, DOJ [announced a settlement](#) with a Michigan township resolving allegations that the township violated RLUIPA in denying zoning approval to allow the Michigan Islamic Academy to build a school on a vacant parcel of land. On December 15, 2016, DOJ sent a [letter](#) about RLUIPA's requirements to mayors and other local officials that includes examples of cases and other resources.

Preventing Racial Discrimination in Voting Laws: In July 2016, DOJ won two critical and complex voting rights cases: first, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit [struck down a North Carolina law](#) that the court described in its ruling as "one of the largest restrictions of the franchise in modern North Carolina history." And, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit [held](#) that Texas' 2011 photographic voter identification law violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Regulating Intelligence Community Collection, Retention, and Dissemination of Data: In August 2016, DoD updated Manual 5240.01, [Procedures Governing the Conduct of DOD Intelligence Activities](#), which establishes procedures governing the collection, retention, and dissemination of information concerning U.S. persons. The Manual updates key aspects of its previous version to reflect changes in technology, law, and intelligence collection practices, including the development of the Internet and increased capabilities to collect and store large amounts of electronic information. These procedures, which further the protection of U.S. persons' privacy interests, are approved by the Attorney General in accordance with Section 2.3 of [Executive Order 12333 of 1981 \(as amended\)](#).

Increasing Paid Sick Leave for Certain Workers: In September 2016, DOL issued [a final rule](#) requiring that certain federal contractors provide their employees up to 56 hours of paid sick leave annually, including for family care and absences resulting from domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It is estimated that once the final rule is implemented fully, it will provide paid sick leave to about 1.15 million workers. Importantly, it will grant economic security to working families by allowing employees to earn paid sick time instead of losing pay or risking their jobs due to illness.



Promoting Fair Housing: In September 2016, HUD issued [Fair Housing Act guidance](#) on local “nuisance ordinances,” aimed at preventing housing discrimination against survivors of domestic violence and other persons in need of emergency services.

Protecting Victims of Trafficking: In FY 2016, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) conducted 42 trainings or engagements, reaching an audience of 5,826 individuals regarding U.S. immigration protections available to non-U.S. citizen victims of trafficking. And, on October 24, 2016, DHS [extended a benefit](#) allowing victims of trafficking to stay in the United States during the investigation of the crime committed against them from one to two years, renewable in increments of up to two years. The extension allows victims of human trafficking to obtain crucial benefits for stabilization while alleviating administrative burdens on victims, service providers, and the government.

Returning Revenues from Liens on Tribal Lands to Tribes: In November 2016, as part of President Obama’s commitment to help American Indian leaders strengthen self-sufficiency and tribal self-determination, [Department of Interior \(DOI\) officials announced](#) that they will remove liens placed on thousands of acres of tribal lands acquired under the Indian Land Consolidation Act (ILCA) program and return the revenues generated by these liens to tribal communities to use for reacquiring tribal homelands. This waiver of the liens ensures that the economic productivity of those restored tribal lands directly benefits the tribes. The return of more than \$14 million existing lien proceeds will be used by the 20 tribal nations that participated in the ILCA acquisition program to purchase lands from willing sellers within their reservations to further consolidate tribal homelands.

Addressing Safe Drinking Water Challenges: On November 30, 2016, EPA published a [National Drinking Water Action Plan](#) to address critical drinking water challenges around the United States. The Plan seeks to ensure that drinking water infrastructure challenges of environmental justice communities are appropriately prioritized and addressed, strengthen protections against lead in drinking water, address the challenges posed by emerging and unregulated contaminants like algal toxins, and strengthen source water protection and resilience of drinking water supplies.

Increasing Transparency and Oversight in National Security Operations: In the past year, the U.S. Government has released several important reports related to oversight and transparency. Most recently, on December 5, 2016, the President issued a [Presidential Memorandum on steps for increased transparency in the use of force](#) directing the preparation and public release of a [report](#) setting forth the key legal and policy frameworks that guide the United States’ use of force, and recommending annual updates of the report as appropriate. Other important reports released this year include:

- In January 2016, the 2016 [Signals Intelligence Reform Progress Report](#);



- In May 2016, ODNI's third annual [Statistical Transparency Report Regarding National Security Authorities](#) on how often the U.S. Government uses certain national security authorities, pursuant to reporting requirements by the USA FREEDOM Act and our ongoing commitment to promote transparency;
- In August 2016, an [unclassified summary](#) of DOJ and ODNI's oversight of the IC's implementation of FISA Section 702; and
- In July 2016, three successive versions of the [Semiannual Assessment of Compliance with Procedures and Guidelines](#) issued pursuant to FISA Section 702.

Respecting Tribal Treaty Rights: As of December 2016, seven federal agencies had signed a [Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Tribal Treaty Rights](#). The MOU commits to consider treaty rights in agency decision-making.