



## **AMERICANS ON HOLD: PROFILING, PREJUDICE, AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Profiling in the Name of National Security**

The U.S. government is engaged in discriminatory profiling against South Asians, Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims in counter-terrorism and immigration policies. These policies, and their dramatic impact on countless individuals and their families, violate fundamental human rights and stand in opposition to the U.S. government's obligations under international human rights law.

### **Reliance on Bloated, Mismanaged Databases & Watch Lists**

- The government uses a number of databases and watch lists to subject people to additional scrutiny in everything from ordinary consumer transactions to security checks.
- The process of adding names to these lists is secretive and prone to error. Those who have been mistakenly added to such lists have no meaningful redress.
- Reliance on such databases caused a lengthy backlog and illegal delays in the screening of citizenship applications which have yet to be fully explained.

### **Profiling at the Border**

- South Asians, Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims and other communities of color are detained and subjected to intrusive questioning and invasive searches at U.S. borders. Border agents have broad discretion to search and question travelers and often rely on discriminatory stereotypes to make assessments about suspicious behavior.

### **Anti-Radicalization Initiatives**

- The government's targeting of "homegrown terrorism," which often focuses on markers of religious practice as markers of potential criminality, has resulted in the criminalization and targeting of Muslims in their places of worship, their homes, and their workplaces.

### **Discrimination by Law Enforcement**

- The Department of Homeland Security's 287(g) program authorizes state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration law. The program is notorious for its use of racial profiling, and undermines the ability of already vulnerable communities to turn to local law enforcement for other key government services.

### **The National Security Entry/Exit Registration Program (NSEERS)**

- NSEERS, introduced in 2002, required the "special registration" of men between the ages of 16 and 45 on visas from predominantly Muslim countries. Nearly 14,000 men were detained or deported as a result of the program, primarily for minor immigration violations. The NSEERS database remains active and those listed in it continue to be targeted.

## What You Can Do to Help End Profiling

- **Speak up!** Contact your representatives in Congress and the President, write a letter to an editor, blog, or call a radio show. Urge the government to:
  - Pass the End Racial Profiling Act to prohibit profiling on all grounds, with no exceptions for national security.
  - Revise the Department of Justice Federal Guidance on Racial Profiling by eliminating the border and national security loopholes, including profiling based on religion and ethnic origin, and making the Guidance enforceable.
  - Eliminate discriminatory Department of Homeland Security programs, including the 287(g) program and the NSEERS program.
  - Limit border and immigration agents' discretion and provide training to discourage discriminatory profiling.
  - Comprehensively review all government databases and watch lists to remove individuals who have been wrongfully included.
  - Develop an effective redress mechanism for people who have been either mistakenly placed on, or linked to, a watch list or database.
  - Respect and ensure U.S. human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
  
- **Know your rights!** Educate yourself and others in your community about your rights if stopped by police or immigration and border officials. Consult resources such as:
  - [http://www.aclu.org/files/kyr/kyr\\_english.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/files/kyr/kyr_english.pdf) and
  - [http://www.muslimadvocates.org/get\\_involved/got\\_rights.html](http://www.muslimadvocates.org/get_involved/got_rights.html)
  
- **Reach out!** Build coalitions between people of all races and religions to fight profiling of all kinds.
  
- **Get involved!** Join and/or support an advocacy organization fighting to end profiling, such as:
  - American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee (ADC): <http://www.adc.org>
  - Council of Peoples Organization (COPPO): <http://www.copousa.org>
  - Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM):  
<http://www.drumnation.org/DRUM/Home.html>
  - Rights Working Group (RWG): <http://www.rightsworkinggroup.org>
  - Sikh Coalition: <http://www.sikhcoalition.org>
  - South Asian American Leading Together (SAALT): <http://www.saalt.org>

