



AMERICANS ON HOLD: PROFILING, PREJUDICE, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

DOCUMENTARY FILM AND ADVOCACY PROJECT

About the Film

Americans on Hold: Profiling, Prejudice, and National Security is a timely and powerful documentary film that exposes the U.S. government's use of discriminatory profiling in the name of national security, and its impact on South Asian, Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim community members.

Produced by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at New York University School of Law, *Americans on Hold: Profiling, Prejudice, and National Security* reveals the harmful effects of prejudicial and ineffective U.S. counter-terrorism and immigration policies.

Through the personal stories of Zuhair Mahd and Anila Ali, the film exposes the discriminatory profiling at the heart of both citizenship delays and border-crossing detentions and delays.

Ali, a teacher, mother, and community organizer originally from Pakistan, received her American citizenship in 2002, but continues to experience humiliating and invasive treatment by Customs and Border Protection officials as a consequence of her national origin.

Mahd, a blind information technologies specialist from Jordan, waged and won a five-year legal struggle against the Department of Homeland Security in his effort to become a U.S. citizen. In the process, he was repeatedly interrogated and pressured by the FBI to become an informant.

Both Mahd and Ali share compelling stories of their experiences with racial profiling and the impact of these experiences on their families, their communities, and their sense of self and security. The film also explores the inherent affront to one's sense of dignity and belonging that results from such discriminatory targeting and from having one's life put "on hold."

As conveyed by notable experts in the film, these delays result from the government's reliance on mismanaged and bloated databases and watch lists in which South Asians, Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims are over-represented due to years of discriminatory profiling, marking the latest phase in a long and tragic trajectory of racial profiling against minority and immigrant communities.

The Americans on Hold Advocacy Campaign

Americans on Hold: Profiling, Prejudice, and National Security is the centerpiece of an advocacy campaign targeted at educating lawmakers and advocates about the discriminatory impacts of post-9/11 immigration and national security policies on South Asian, Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim community members. The film is both a moving call to action—as the U.S. enters into a pivotal moment in immigration reform—and a creative vehicle for educating the public.

CHRGJ works closely with community-based and immigrant rights organizations that share its concerns about the pernicious influence of the counter-terrorism framework on immigration policies and immigrant communities. The film is designed to serve as a useful tool to educate lawmakers and members of the general public, and to help mobilize for change. Specifically, the project:

- Raises awareness and generates discussion about the racial, ethnic, religious, and national origin profiling inherent in discriminatory counter-terrorism measures.
- Draws attention to the acute and disproportionate impact these policies have on South Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab, and Muslim community members.
- Provides real life examples of how these measures have a profound impact on the human rights of targeted individuals, their families, and their communities.
- Promotes public debate, catalyzes policy change, and calls for greater accountability and transparency from the current administration.

For more information, or to arrange a screening of *Americans on Hold: Profiling, Prejudice, and National Security* in your community, please visit <http://chrgj.org/projects/profiling.html> or contact:

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About CHRGJ

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University School of Law was established in 2002 to bring together the law school's teaching, research, clinical, internship, and publishing activities around issues of international human rights law.

The Center's work on racial profiling and counter-terrorism has exposed the ways in which the U.S. and other governments are profiling individuals deemed terrorism 'suspects' on the basis of their race, religion, ethnicity, and/or national origin. To document and advocate against the illegal use of such profiling in counter-terrorism and immigration policies, the Center has published two widely-cited reports—*Americans on Hold: Profiling, Citizenship, and the "War on Terror"* and *Irreversible Consequences: Racial Profiling and Lethal Force in the "War on Terror"*—which, respectively, highlight the problematic use of name checks in U.S. naturalization applications and of so-called behavioral profiling in the context of dangerous "shoot-to-kill" policies. These reports highlight the wide-ranging impact of these measures on the human rights of those targeted, and situate these practices as clear violations of international human rights law. For more on our work on racial profiling and counter-terrorism, please visit: <http://chrgj.org/projects/profiling.html>