

AMERICANS ON HOLD: DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

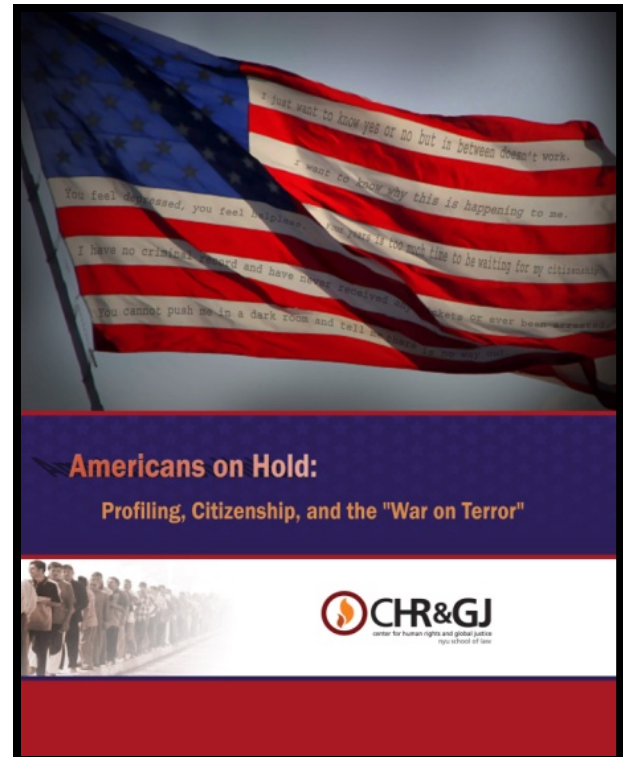
Since September 11, 2001 counter-terrorism efforts have increasingly informed U.S. immigration policy, strongly communicating the problematic message that immigrants are to be regarded as potential threats to national security. Increased security checks in the citizenship application process, manifested in a substantial expansion of name-check procedures, have illegally delayed hundreds of thousands of applications, often for years on end.

These delays have had a profound impact on Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian applicants. According to civil society groups, citizenship delays now rank as a primary issue of concern for Muslims in America today.

Citizenship delays represent the final barrier to officially becoming an “American.” Occurring in the context of a broader climate of prejudice and fear, delays reinforce in a poignant and symbolic way the exclusion of those who are arbitrarily categorized as “terrorist others” on the basis of their name, religion, ethnicity, or national origin.

In April 2007, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (“CHR&GJ”) at New York University School of Law released its report *Americans on Hold: Profiling, Citizenship, and the “War on Terror,”* which documents the impact of citizenship delays on the lives of applicants who are kept in limbo, sometimes for years on end.

The narratives and stories contained in this report are emblematic of the experiences of immigrants nationwide who suffer from profiling and discrimination as they strive to become American citizens.



One applicant told us: *“I call my family every day and whenever I call them my youngest daughter asks me, ‘Papa, when are you coming? When can I be there to meet you?’ All the time I carry the pictures of my family in my wallet and I am dying to see them.”* (American “on Hold” since 2001).

Inspired by these stories, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice is producing a documentary film, which will be used as an advocacy tool to raise awareness on the issue. The film will show that far from being mere bureaucratic inconveniences, citizenship delays cause substantial harm, ranging from separation of families to repression of individuals’ personal and religious identities and denial of basic welfare.

The film aims to humanize the effects of these policies and to expose the dangers of reactionary measures which are borne out of and institutionalize fear. The film will also demonstrate that these human rights violations are the products of an inefficient and counter-productive system; one that threatens to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of

individuals from all communities ahead of the November 2008 elections.

Production on the film is already underway and a number of individuals from across the country are on standby ready to be filmed. *We need your help* bringing their stories to life and ending citizenship delays.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

TELL US YOUR STORY

The CHRGGJ is in the process of collecting stories from people experiencing citizenship delays since the events of September 11, 2001. It is our hope that these stories will illustrate the real effects of discriminatory and inefficient governmental policies, and highlight the detrimental impact of discriminatory profiling on American society as a whole. Entries may be signed, or may be submitted anonymously, as you prefer. Please send an email to aohihrc@nyu.edu to share your story.

HELP US REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

If you know of any individuals or families whose lives have been affected by security check related citizenship delays and who might wish to take part in the documentary please feel free to forward this newsletter to them and please refer them to us for more information. Our team can be reached at aohihrc@nyu.edu or 646-438-2341. We need your support to help shed light on these human rights issues and advocate for change.

BECOME A PRODUCER!

We are aiming to raise \$100,000 to complete production and post-production work on the documentary. Production is being handled by the CHRGGJ at NYU School of Law alongside WH Media (www.wh-media.com). Our aim is to tell this cinematic story as powerfully as possible. Support *Americans on Hold* and you will receive a credit in the film:

Title	Contribution
Supporter	\$100
Friend	\$250
Sponsor	\$500
Benefactor	\$1,000
Associate Producer	\$5,000
Co-Executive Producer	\$10,000
Executive Producer	\$25,000 or more

To donate online, please go to our website at www.chrgj.org and see the “Donate Now” button on the homepage. To donate by check, please make your contribution out to the “Center for Human Rights and Global Justice” (please include “documentary project” in the memo line). Checks can be sent to *Jeannie Forrest*, Office of Development and Alumni Relations, 161 Avenue of the Americas, 5th Floor, New York, NY, 10013.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

Our report *Americans on Hold* and related materials are available at <http://chrgj.org/projects/profiling.html>