



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Justice

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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the DOJ's Handling of Known or Suspected Terrorists Admitted into the Federal Witness Security Program

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report on the DOJ's handling of known or suspected terrorists (KSTs) admitted into the federal Witness Security Program (WITSEC Program). Today's report from the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) follows up on a May 2013 interim report in which the OIG made 16 recommendations to improve information sharing among the entities responsible for the WITSEC Program, and to reduce the risk to the public when admitting KSTs into the WITSEC Program.

In today's report, the OIG concludes that while the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), United States Marshals Service (USMS), and the DOJ Criminal Division's Office of Enforcement Operations (OEO) have adopted policies and procedures to address the issues we identified in our interim report, they have not sufficiently and appropriately implemented all of them. Additionally, we remain concerned that the DOJ has not ensured that KST information has been appropriately shared with relevant national security stakeholders, and that those responsible for monitoring these KSTs have the information they need to do so effectively.

The specific findings in today's report include:

- Since November 2015, OEO has followed its protocols and appropriately coordinated with the FBI and USMS when admitting new KSTs into the WITSEC Program.
- In response to our interim report finding that the DOJ had not identified all KSTs that had been admitted into the WITSEC Program, OEO and the USMS performed a case file review and identified additional KSTs in the program. However, we found that OEO's sharing with the FBI of the information it identified during the file review was often marked by delay, and that the FBI's assessments of that information were inadequately documented.
- The FBI, USMS, and OEO took corrective actions to address our 2013 finding that some essential identifying information about KSTs in the WITSEC Program had not been provided to the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) for inclusion on the consolidated terrorist watchlist. However, during this follow-up audit we identified critical and important pieces of identifying information about KSTs in the WITSEC Program that the FBI should have provided to the TSC, but did not.
- The FBI also did not follow other established procedures for sharing of information on KSTs who had been admitted into the WITSEC Program, and as a result some officials who were responsible for monitoring these KSTs did not have all of the information they needed.

- Other aspects of the administration of the WITSEC Program need improvements, including the policies and procedures for terminating participants. Of particular concern, we found that OEO delayed the termination of a WITSEC Program participant who was under investigation for inappropriate sexual contact with a 15-year-old, but had not yet been charged. OEO did not effectuate termination for a period of 9 months after the USMS and OEO became aware of prior sexual assault allegations against the participant, including alleged assaults against minors. During this time OEO determined that three bases for termination proposed by USMS were inadequate. We found this delay in the participant's termination very troubling.

Today's report makes eight new recommendations to the USMS, FBI, and OEO to further improve the sharing of information on KST WITSEC Program participants with national security stakeholders, and to ensure that there are appropriate controls over KSTs in the WITSEC Program. The USMS, FBI, and OEO agreed with all of the recommendations.

Some information has been redacted from today's report due to statutory restrictions and concerns about national security and the safety of participants in the WITSEC Program cited by the Department.

Report: Today's report, which contains redactions due to statutory restrictions and the DOJ's concerns about national security and the safety of WITSEC Program participants, can be found on the OIG's website at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2017/a1734.pdf>.

Video: To accompany the report, the OIG has released a 2-minute video featuring the Inspector General summarizing the report's findings. The video and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/multimedia/>.

Related OIG Reports:

- The OIG's May 2013 interim report on the DOJ's handling of KSTs admitted into the WITSEC Program is available [here](#).
- The OIG's March 2015 report on the DOJ's handling of sex offenders in the WITSEC Program is available [here](#).