

**Transcript: “A Message from the Inspector General: The Department of Justice’s Handling of Known or Suspected Terrorists Admitted into the Federal Witness Security Program,” September 2017**

Hello, I’m Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, our office released a follow-up report on the Justice Department’s handling of known or suspected terrorists who have been admitted into the federal Witness Security Program. We found that the Justice Department has adopted policies and procedures to address the issues we previously identified. However, not all of these policies have been sufficiently implemented.

As a result, we remain concerned that the Justice Department has not appropriately shared information about known or suspected terrorists with all of the relevant national security stakeholders. In particular, we found that those responsible for monitoring these individuals do not have the information they need. We also found numerous instances where information sharing was delayed, and we identified critical and important pieces of identifying information about known or suspected terrorists in the Witness Security Program that were not provided to the Terrorist Screening Center.

We also identified aspects of the Witness Security Program’s administration that need to be improved, including the timeliness of addressing serious misconduct by program participants. For example, one Program participant was alleged to have sexually assaulted five individuals, including three minors, yet it took the Justice Department 9 months from the time it learned of these allegations to terminate the individual from the Program. We found this delay very troubling.

The operations of the Witness Security Program require the ongoing attention of the Department’s senior leadership. A program that was designed to protect cooperating witnesses must be operated in a manner that also ensures the public’s safety. It is absolutely essential that the Justice Department ensure that the national security vulnerabilities and other issues identified during our audit are addressed promptly and completely.

To learn more about today’s report, and to see our other reports on the Witness Security Program, please visit our website, [oig.justice.gov](http://oig.justice.gov).

Thank you for joining us.