

Transcript: “A Message from IG Horowitz: Top Management and Performance Challenges for the Department of Justice – 2016,” November 2016

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

Today our office issued a report identifying the Top Management and Performance Challenges for the Department of Justice. We publish a similar report each year, based on our oversight work, research, and judgment. This year's report has particular relevance, providing a snapshot of the most significant issues facing the Justice Department as it prepares for the upcoming Presidential transition.

Once again on this year's list are two challenges that are important to both the Department and every American: national security and cyber security. We believe that recent terrorist attacks in our homeland and several notorious hacks of American IT systems demonstrate that these challenges are formidable, and will demand the Department's close attention for the foreseeable future.

Another challenge that continues to be a matter of great public importance is the need to strengthen relationships between the police and the communities they serve. While this is primarily an issue for state and local governments to address, we believe the Department can have a significant impact by providing national leadership, grants, training, and oversight, as well as legal intervention when necessary.

We added two new challenges to this year's list. One of them is how the Department can help to address violent crime. With neighborhoods in some major cities overwhelmed by gang and gun violence, the Department can play an important role in addressing this problem by effectively marshaling federal resources, and by sharing knowledge from communities that have reduced violent crime.

The other challenge we added this year is managing human capital. This issue is not new, but it has become more pressing because, as of September 2014, approximately 31 percent of the Department's permanent career employees were eligible to retire by 2019. The Department is therefore faced with the difficult task of recruiting and retaining large numbers of experienced attorneys, agents, and other professionals with the specialized skills necessary to combat terrorism, cyberattacks, financial crime, and public corruption.

The other four important, continuing challenges we identified this year are:

- Managing an overcrowded federal prison system
- Overseeing law enforcement programs
- Monitoring the billions of dollars of contracts and grants that the Department awards each year, and
- Improving the impact of Department programs through performance based management.

As the Department's independent watchdog, we will continue to conduct audits, investigations, and reviews throughout the coming year to help the Department meet these challenges.

To read our full Top Challenges report, please visit our website, oig.justice.gov.

Thank you for joining us.