



The Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison's Department of Justice Newsletter

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Newsletter from the Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison

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DOJ Discusses Election Day Preparedness Plan



Attorney General Mukasey delivers remarks before leaders of civil rights organizations concerning the Department's plans to protect voting rights in the upcoming federal election.

On September 8, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Grace Chung Becker, and other senior officials of the Department of Justice met with leaders of civil rights organizations, as well as national organizations representing state and local officials, secretaries of state and attorneys general offices from across the country, to review plans to protect voting rights in the upcoming federal election.

"The Justice Department must make every effort to help ensure that the November elections are run as smoothly as possible – and, equally important, that the American people have confidence in our electoral process," Attorney General Mukasey said. "Communicating openly with groups interested in the protection of voting rights and with the state and local officials primarily responsible for administering our elections is vital to that effort."

"As the United States Supreme Court has recognized, the right to vote is fundamental because it is preservative of all our other rights," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Becker. "Vigorous enforcement of all our voting laws is a priority for the Civil Rights Division."

2008 Project Safe Childhood National Conference

The Department of Justice hosted the 2008 Project Safe Childhood (PSC) National Conference in Columbus, Ohio, from September 23 through 26. The conference, which highlighted efforts to protect children from online predators through the Department's PSC initiative, is intended to strengthen relationships across agencies and jurisdictions, especially among federal law enforcement and regional Internet Crimes Against Children task forces.

Attorney General Mukasey presented the keynote address, and other Justice Department senior officials also addressed the conference. Local, state, and federal law enforcement; prosecutors; and community partners discussed ways to implement best practices in protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

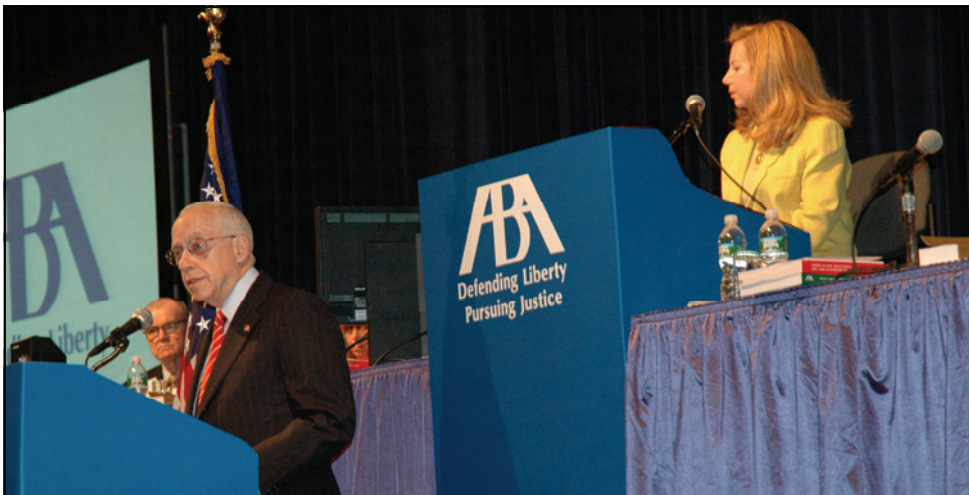
PSC is a Department of Justice initiative launched in 2006 that aims to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. The threat of sexual predators soliciting children for physical sexual contact is well-known and serious; the danger of perpetrators who produce, distribute, and possess child pornography is equally dramatic and disturbing.

The Department of Justice is committed to the safety and well-being of every child and has placed a high priority on combating sexual exploitation of minors.



Attorney General Mukasey delivers the keynote address at the 2008 Project Safe Childhood National Conference.

AG Addresses American Bar Association



Attorney General Mukasey delivers remarks before the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates at the ABA 2008 Annual Meeting.

On August 12, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey delivered remarks on professionalism at the Department of Justice to the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates at the ABA 2008 Annual Meeting.

Attorney General Mukasey acknowledged the ABA's 130-year history of involvement in the issues that shape American law and the way it is practiced. Further, he specifically noted the ABA's role in setting and maintaining professional standards.

The Attorney General then discussed the recent reports by the Department's Office of Inspector General and Office of Professional Responsibility, and the steps the Department of Justice has taken to address issues raised in those reports.

Highlights from the Attorney General's Speech:

"The mission of the Justice Department is the evenhanded application of the Constitution and the laws enacted under it. That mission has to start with the evenhanded application of the laws within our own Department. Some people at the Department deviated from that strict standard, and the institution failed to stop them."

"As a result of all the reforms we have made, I am confident that the Department is on surer footing today than it has ever been before, and that the institutional problems identified in the reports have been remedied. Nevertheless, I will continue my efforts to identify additional ways to improve the Department."

2008 National Conference on Human Trafficking

Attorney General Mukasey, Associate Attorney General Kevin J. O'Connor and Elisebeth C. Cook, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Policy, addressed the 2008 National Conference on Human Trafficking, September 9 and September 10, 2008. The Attorney General addressed the conference via video message.

Addressing the Conference on September 10, 2008, Associate Attorney General O'Connor announced almost \$10 million in additional funding to supplement existing task forces and to expand the number of task forces working with community-based organizations to combat human trafficking.

"Human Trafficking is a serious crime and deserves the focused attention of law enforcement and victim service providers," said Associate Attorney General O'Connor. "The task forces receiving funding today are made up of both of these important elements. We will continue to use all of the resources at our disposal to make sure that traffickers are convicted and that victims receive the assistance they need to recover."

The conference brought together federal, state and local law enforcement and victim services task forces members organized specifically to identify, investigate and prosecute human trafficking operations. In addition, conference speakers addressed the most current information and resources available to assist victims and capture those responsible for trafficking human beings.

175 Alleged Gulf Cartel Members and Associates Arrested

On September 17, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey announced that 175 individuals were arrested on charges related to an international drug trafficking cartel in a coordinated enforcement action by hundreds of international, federal, state and local law enforcement officials throughout the United States and Italy. Including the operations announced that day, a long-term investigation of one of Mexico's largest drug trafficking cartels and its U.S. and international distribution networks resulted in the arrest of more than 500 individuals in the United States, Mexico and Italy to date.

"Project Reckoning," a multi-agency law enforcement effort led by the Drug Enforcement Agency, targeted the Mexican drug trafficking cartel known as the Gulf Cartel.

"By spreading dangerous drugs and resorting to brutal violence, international drug cartels pose an extraordinary threat both here and abroad," said Attorney General Mukasey. "The scope of the threat demands a deliberate and sustained response and the success we have had, such as the takedowns announced today, is due to the combined efforts of federal, state, local and international law enforcement. Although I am pleased with the efforts so far, we cannot and will not rest on these successes. The threat posed by international drug cartels is too great. It will take all of us working together to prevail."

An indictment is merely an allegation and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.



Attorney General Mukasey is joined by David E. Nahmias, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, at the September 17, 2008, announcement.

Justice Department Counter-Terrorism Efforts Since 9/11

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the highest priority of the Justice Department has been to protect America against acts of terrorism. Despite repeated and sustained efforts by terrorists, there has not been another terrorist attack on American soil in the past seven years. During this time, the Justice Department has significantly improved its ability to identify, penetrate, and dismantle terrorist plots as a result of a series of structural reforms, the development of new intelligence and law enforcement tools, and a new mindset that values information sharing, communication and prevention. Working with its federal, state, and local partners as well as international counterparts, the Justice Department has not rested in its efforts to safeguard America.

For detailed information on these efforts, please visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2008/September/08-nsd-807.html>.

Project Safe Neighborhood

On August 14, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey met with Denver's Metro Gang Task Force, and announced that the Department of Justice intended to award more than \$17 million to combat gangs and gun crime around the country through locally organized Project Safe Neighborhood task forces.

35th Annual ALEC Meeting

On August 1, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey delivered remarks at the 35th Annual Meeting of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). In the photo above he is greeted by Victor Schwartz, a member of ALEC's Board of Scholars as well as co-chair of ALEC's Civil Justice Reform Committee.

COPS Announces Grants for Native-American Law Enforcement Agencies and for School Safety

On August 28, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) announced grants totaling \$14.9 million that were awarded to 80 tribal police departments and governments in 22 states. The funds support tribal law enforcement efforts to reduce crime and disorder, and to enhance the services that they provide.

On September 11, 2008, COPS announced that more than \$14 million in grants had been awarded to 143 local law enforcement agencies and municipalities to enhance school safety in 34 states. The grants were awarded through the COPS Secure Our Schools program, which provides funds to improve security at schools and on school grounds.

Louisiana Man Sentenced for Using Nooses to Threaten "Jena Six" Marchers

On August 15, 2008, Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, and Donald W. Washington, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, announced that Jeremiah Munsen, 19, of Pineville, La., was sentenced to four months in prison for his role in using nooses to threaten marchers who participated in the "Jena Six" civil rights rally. In addition to the four-month prison term, Munsen received one year of supervised release and 125 hours of community service.

On Sept. 20, 2007, in an incident that garnered national media attention, Munsen and another person allegedly attached the nooses to the back of a pickup truck and repeatedly drove slowly and menacingly past a large group of African American individuals who had gathered at a bus depot in Alexandria, La., after attending the civil rights rally in Jena.

"The defendant used a threatening and offensive tactic to intimidate peaceful civil rights marchers who were in Louisiana to rally against racial intolerance," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Grace Chung Becker. "The Civil Rights Division will continue to vigorously pursue racially motivated threats that violate federal law."

*ARTICLES - Office of Public Affairs and Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison
 PICTURES - DOJ Photography; Page 2 ABA Conference photo courtesy of ABA; Page 3 photo courtesy of DEA
 Page 4 PSN Photo courtesy of the District of Colorado U.S. Attorney's Office; Page 4 ALEC Meeting photo courtesy of ALEC*