



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

**LORETTA E. LYNCH
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FOR A HEARING TITLED

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**Statement of Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch
Before the Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
November 17, 2015**

Good morning, Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Conyers, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today to share some of the recent accomplishments of the U.S. Department of Justice; to discuss some of my top priorities as Attorney General; and to explore ways we can continue working together to build the stronger nation and the more empowered communities that the American people need and deserve.

I want to begin by commenting on Friday's reprehensible and heartbreaking attacks in Paris. The Department of Justice and the Obama Administration stand in solidarity with France, just as France has so often stood with us. As President Obama said, this is not just an attack on Paris or the people of France – it is an attack on all of humanity and the universal values that we share. We are committed to doing everything within our power to assist our French law enforcement colleagues in bringing those responsible for this monstrous act of terror to justice. And as we go forward, our thoughts and prayers will be with the victims and their loved ones.

As this Committee well knows, our nation faces a host of serious, varied, and evolving challenges – from threats against our homeland, to attacks on our information networks; and from tension in our communities, to the scourge of human trafficking. These are challenges that will require a concerted effort to address. And I want you to know that the Department of Justice is dedicated to taking effective action across the board.

Our highest priority must always be the security of our homeland, and we are acting aggressively to defuse threats as they emerge and thwart attacks before they occur – at home, abroad, and online. We are working around the clock to uncover and disrupt plots that take aim at our people, our infrastructure, and our way of life. We continue to investigate and apprehend those who seek to harm us – including upwards of 70 individuals charged since 2013 for conduct related to foreign-fighter activity and homegrown violent extremism. And we remain focused on the threat posed by domestic extremists – continuing to make improvements to ensure nationwide coordination on domestic terrorism issues, including through the reconstitution of the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee.

At the same time, we are placing particular emphasis on countering security threats in cyberspace. We are perpetually on guard against individuals, organized groups, terrorists, and state actors who might attempt to steal our data, endanger our economy, compromise our privacy, and threaten our security. We know we must stay nimble as we combat sophisticated cyber-actors constantly adapting their techniques, and we've done so in part by increasing our focus on cyber threats, leading to unprecedented actions to disrupt cyber intrusions from criminal actors, nation states, and terrorists. In addition, in recognition of the need for strong public-private partnerships in cybersecurity, we created a new cybersecurity unit within our Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section and announced a

National Security Division outreach initiative to promote information sharing and resilience as part of the Division's national asset protection program. I've also been meeting personally with corporate executives and general counsels around the country to spread our message of cyber-awareness, to encourage strategic collaboration, and to find promising new ways to protect American consumers from exploitation and abuse.

Of course, to bring about the stronger nation we seek, we must also empower the communities within our borders. Across the country, brave police officers risk their lives every day to protect our neighborhoods and perform an invaluable and heroic service to the residents of their jurisdictions, and we are grateful for their dedication and their valor. But we have seen even recently the devastating results of mistrust between law enforcement officers and the citizens we serve, and experienced the consequences when decades of tension erupt into unrest. Restoring that essential trust is one of my top priorities as Attorney General, and the Justice Department intends to do everything we can to foster those essential bonds and create more safe, more fair, and more just communities across the country. To that end, during the first 100 days of my tenure, I conducted a six-city community policing tour to engage with communities that have made progress in this area. The tour progressed through Cincinnati, Ohio; Birmingham, Alabama; East Haven, Connecticut; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Seattle, Washington; and Richmond, California – and in each of those cities, I convened roundtable discussions with leaders and representatives from across the community, including law enforcement officers, public officials, civic leaders, and young people. And over the course of those conversations, participants were able to impart their ideas, discuss their experiences, and share some of the most effective ways that citizens and law enforcement can join forces to foster trust, to build respect, and to spread mutual understanding. Additionally, the Department of Justice is supporting a range of programs and offices to help promote best practices and improve trust. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, for example, continues to implement and expand its Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance, which provides a means for organizational transformation through an analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods around specific issues.

We are also paying special attention to those in our communities who are vulnerable, voiceless, and in need of a helping hand – particularly those caught in the clutches of human trafficking, a heinous offense that has appropriately been described as modern-day slavery. Seeking justice for the victims of human trafficking is a cause that has long been close to my heart, and it is now one of my main priorities as Attorney General. In June, I announced that the Department would be expanding a highly effective interagency initiative – known as the Anti-Trafficking Coordination Team Initiative – that coordinates and streamlines anti-trafficking work across the Departments of Justice, Labor, and Homeland Security. And in September, I announced that the Department would be extending \$44 million in new grant funding to help support research, bring more traffickers to justice, and care for survivors. I want to thank our partners in Congress for their invaluable support – by tripling human-trafficking-related funding for our Office of Justice Programs in Fiscal Year 2015, Congress was instrumental in allowing us to increase our grant funding in this critical area. This October marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which is a fitting occasion to redouble our commitment to creating more opportunities to save and transform lives, and to the work of eradicating this pernicious practice once and for all.

Of course, I recognize, as you do, that the progress we seek on so many pressing issues will not be achieved overnight. But by diligently prosecuting abuse, combating exploitation, and lifting up those who have been let down, left out, and left behind, the Justice Department will continue to do our part to aid all those who are in desperate need of assistance, opportunity, and justice.

Finally, I would like to give you an update on our recent experience with criminal justice reform at the federal level – an issue of central importance to the Department of Justice, and a topic that I know has been a focus of this Committee. I want to commend the members of the Committee who have come together, from across the aisle, to help chart a new course on criminal justice that will make our society both stronger and more secure. It is a course built in part on the success of the Smart on Crime initiative that my predecessor, Attorney General Eric Holder, launched in 2013, which shifted our approach away from harsh mandatory sentences for low-level drug offenses. It has enabled us to focus on more serious cases and more significant violent defendants, while better supporting rehabilitation and reentry programs that can reduce recidivism and promote public safety. But more work needs to be done. Prison spending has increasingly displaced other critical public safety investments – such as resources for investigation, prosecution, prevention, intervention, prison reentry, and support for state and local law enforcement – and to most effectively make our sentencing laws more efficient, more effective, and more just, congressional action is needed. Reform has been embraced by prosecutors, law enforcement, and policymakers of all stripes. And the Justice Department is eager to see meaningful sentencing reform enacted during this Congress.

We are hoping to make a similarly positive impact through another recalibration of our approach to criminal and civil justice, which Deputy Attorney General Yates announced in September. The aim is to strengthen our ability to go after individual defendants both criminally and civilly in connection with investigations of corporate misconduct. We made several changes in institutional policy about how we investigate, charge, and resolve cases – including an important new rule requiring any company seeking cooperation credit to investigate and identify the individuals involved in the company’s misconduct, and then provide all non-privileged evidence about those individuals. The new policies will not only help us bring individual wrongdoers to justice – thereby deterring future illegality and incentivizing corporate behavioral reform – but will also send an unmistakable message that, in the eyes of the Justice Department, committing a crime behind a desk is no different than committing one behind a mask.

Thank you all for your time and attention this morning. Thank you for the chance to bring these and other priorities before you today. And thank you for your ongoing support of the Justice Department’s important efforts. I look forward to working closely with you to advance the many objectives we share and to build on the inspiring progress our institutions have already made.

At this time, I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.