



Inside ICE

ICE, CBP, TSA BEGIN JOINT OPERATION TARGETING HUMAN SMUGGLING AT LAX

ICE agents began operations July 14 in the first phase of a high-visibility operation to deter human smuggling activity in the Los Angeles area. The initial focus of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) multi-agency, intelligence-driven enforcement effort is Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), a key West Coast transportation hub used increasingly by criminal organizations to move smuggled migrants across the country.

Beginning July 14, teams of ICE investigators, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol agents and CBP inspectors were operating in high-profile locations throughout the airport. The teams have three goals – to curb human smuggling activity at the facility; to interdict and arrest suspected smugglers; and to gather additional intelligence about smuggling methods. At press time, 89 illegal aliens had been apprehended at LAX and another 13 at the Ontario International Airport near Los Angeles.

Throughout the operation, ICE and Border Patrol will work closely with the other Homeland Security agencies that maintain a presence at LAX, including CBP Inspections and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

“Human smuggling is a violent criminal enterprise that puts the safety of our communities and even our country at risk,” DHS Undersecretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson said.

The LAX operation is an outgrowth of ICE’s Operation ICE Storm and the Arizona Border Control Initiative, an ongoing Homeland Security operation to stem smuggling activity and the accompany-



Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson discusses the joint operation at Los Angeles International Airport with national news media at ICE Headquarters.

ing crime and violence in neighboring Arizona. As a result of the crackdown, many criminal smuggling organizations are shifting their activities to the Los Angeles area where they hold the undocumented migrants while arranging for transportation to destinations nationwide.

Earlier this year, ICE agents arrested several groups of smuggled migrants at LAX destined for cities throughout the United States. Additionally, other large groups of smuggled aliens were apprehended at airports on the East Coast after arriving on flights originating at LAX.

The presence of ICE and Border Patrol agents at LAX is not expected to disrupt airport operations or cause delays for legitimate travelers. Cutting off access to LAX is expected to increase smugglers’ reliance on so-called “drop houses” where they attempt to conceal their human cargo.

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Operation Predator: Unprecedented Success

On July 9, Asa Hutchinson, Homeland Security Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security, and Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia announced that the first year of Operation Predator has resulted in 3,247 arrests nationwide. Additionally, the department's comprehensive initiative to safeguard children from foreign national pedophiles, human traffickers, international sex tourists and Internet pornographers has allowed foreign law enforcement to arrest more than 500 individuals based on ICE investigative leads.

PUBLIC SECURITY

Operation Predator evolved out of ICE's mission to find and deport illegal aliens -- particularly those with criminal records, and reflects the agency's traditional public safety mission.

"When we launched the program a year ago, we knew that a systematic, comprehensive approach to targeting child sex predators would make a difference. We knew it would make kids safer. But we had no idea it would be as successful as it has been," said Assistant Secretary Garcia.

Those arrested fall into four general categories of criminal:

Foreign National Child Predators: More than half of the arrests made as part of Operation Predator

have been arrests of foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 450 of these predators have been deported. For example, in October 2003, ICE agents arrested Jose Luis Melchor-Aparicio, who impregnated his own daughter and then demanded that she have an abortion. Melchor, who failed to register as a sex offender, had two prior deportation orders and attempted to hide his identity from ICE agents by lying and using fake documents.

International Child Sex Tourists: Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE's attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents made the first six arrests under the new child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act. The first of those arrested, Michael Lewis Clark, 70, was sentenced in June 2004 to 97 months in jail.

Human Smuggling and Trafficking of Children: The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger. In one case, a predator tried to purchase young girls, ages 9 to 11, from Mexico. ICE agents arrested the individual when he traveled to Arizona to have sex with the girls.

Internet Child Pornography: Drawing on ICE's cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation's virtual borders. Moreover, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 1,230 children have been identified in pornographic images.

In what is believed to be the largest Internet child pornography investigation to date, ICE agents have arrested 116 individuals in the United



Operation Predator

States and have provided leads to foreign law enforcement that have resulted in 505 arrests in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Scotland and Hong Kong as part of an ongoing probe into an Internet billing company in Minsk, Belarus.

In another horrific example, on February 26, 2004, ICE agents arrested Larry Michael Jeffs at his residence in El Dorado Hills, California, on federal child pornography charges. During the arrest, ICE agents seized a sexually explicit video showing Jeffs engaged in sexual acts with a 2-month-old girl.

Operation Predator brings together an array of ICE authorities and resources to target these child sexual abusers. For example, ICE has established a single web portal to access all publicly available state Megan's Law databases. ICE has also created a National Child Victim Identification System in partnership with other agencies.

In addition, ICE agents stationed internationally are working with foreign governments and their foreign law enforcement counterparts to enhance coordination and cooperation on crimes that cross borders. ICE is also working with INTERPOL to enhance foreign government intelligence on criminal child predators.

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Please send comments and contributions to: Russ.Bergeron@dhs.gov
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ICE AMO RESCUES 12 IN MONA PASSAGE TRAGEDY

ICE and the Coast Guard in San Juan, Puerto Rico were searching for approximately 20 missing migrants after rescuing 12 from their overturned boat three miles north-west of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico July 12.

BORDER SECURITY

A C-12 patrol aircraft from ICE's Air and Marine Operations Branch in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, was on a routine patrol when its crew spotted the capsized vessel shortly after 8 p.m. on July 12.

The Coast Guard Greater Antilles Section was notified and dispatched the Coast Guard Cutters Cushing and Venturous to the location. The vessels arrived within 35 minutes and immediately began recovering migrants found clinging to the boat's hull.

ICE aircraft and Coast Guard crews continue to search for survivors along with a Coast Guard HH-65 Dolphin helicopter launched from Air Station Borinquen. Preliminary information from those rescued indicated the possibility of another 20 missing. Ten men and two women had been rescued. The boat that capsized was a 29-foot open fishing vessel with twin 150-hp outboard engines that fits the description of one reported as stolen from Bahia Beach, Dominican Republic the morning of July 12.

Two weeks earlier, a boat carrying 94 migrants capsized



ICE's Air and Marine Operations spotted an overturned boat similar to the one shown above in the Mona Pass near Puerto Rico and directed the U.S. Coast Guard in a mission that rescued 12 persons. The Dominican Republic has historically been a major source country for illegal aliens attempting to enter the U.S. Crossing the Mona Passage (the body of water between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) to enter Puerto Rico, thousands have taken to sea in a variety of vessels. The most common is a homemade fishing vessel known as a Yola, like the one shown above.

en route to Puerto Rico's Western coast. Three Dominican migrants died.

Since Oct. 1, ICE has apprehended more than 2,000 migrants attempting to illegally enter into the United States through Puerto Rico.

ICE AGENTS TARGET N.Y. MONEY LAUNDERING RING



ICE agents escort one of four men arrested on money laundering and immigration charges in an operation targeting a Turkish organization.

ICE agents executed four arrest warrants and searched more than a dozen gas stations, mini-marts and residences in the Long Island, N.Y. area as part of an enforcement action targeting an alleged Turkish organized crime ring suspected of violating U.S. money laundering and immigration laws to raise and move millions of dollars overseas.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

"This action targeted a highly-structured and organized criminal enterprise that flaunted our nation's laws to raise staggering sums of money," said Martin Ficke, ICE New York's Special Agent-in-Charge. "An important part of protecting the homeland is ensuring that our economic and immigration systems are not abused by criminal elements. ICE is committed to using its considerable assets and authorities to deny criminal organizations the ability to earn, store or move illicit funds."

ICE GETS MAJOR "SPECIAL INTEREST" SMUGGLER

An Egyptian national who was one of ICE's most significant human smuggling targets was arrested by ICE agents July 2 on charges stemming from his role in an international conspiracy to smuggle aliens, including those from special interest nations linked to international terrorism, into the United States.

BORDER SECURITY

Ashraf Ahmed Abdallah, 34, was arrested at Miami International Airport, part of a stop in his travels from Ecuador to Egypt. Abdallah is the subject of an indictment that was returned under seal on Dec. 21, 2001, and unsealed upon his arrest. He returned to Egypt in January 2002.

The five-count indictment, returned by a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., alleges that Abdallah and his associates conspired to bring unauthorized aliens, mostly from Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries, into the United States between June 2001 and October 2001.

Specifically, Abdallah is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit alien smuggling, and four counts of aiding and abetting an attempt to bring unauthorized aliens into the country for financial gain. The investigation of Abdallah's smuggling operation continues.

"The arrest of Abdallah is a landmark achievement for the Department of Homeland Security and for ICE," said Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia. Among the ranks of international human smuggling kingpins, Abdallah was one of ICE's most wanted targets in the world. ICE agents tracked this individual around the globe for years and ultimately were able to secure his arrest. The fact that Abdallah is no longer smuggling individuals from special interest nations into the United States makes America a safer nation."

Abdallah's arrest arose from an investigation in which he allegedly was identified as the principal in an operation to smuggle aliens into the United States, particularly citizens

of Egypt and its neighboring countries, for commercial advantage and private financial gain. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Abdallah and his associates would direct the migrants to travel to Brazil, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and other Latin American countries, and from there to Guatemala, the base of the smuggling operation.

According to the indictment, Abdallah would then stage the migrants in Guatemala and have them transported by his associates through Mexico for illegal entry into the United States. Abdallah allegedly demanded the payment of thousands of dollars as a smuggling fee. The indictment also alleges that he kept the aliens' passports to guarantee payment of the final installments of their smuggling fees upon their arrival in the United States.

ICE special agents from the Washington, D.C., Mexico City, Guatemala, Ecuador and Madrid offices were involved in the investigation and arrest of Abdallah.

GARCIA, FORMAN DISCUSS IPR AT CHAMBER MEETING

ICE's efforts to protect International Property Rights (IPR) were the focus of comments by Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia and ICE Office of Investigation's Marcy Forman during their participation in a U.S. Chamber of Commerce roundtable discussion held in Washington, D.C., July 8.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Joined by representatives from industry leading firms, Garcia and Forman said that an active partnership between law enforcement and the private sector is a key part of Cornerstone, ICE's flagship initia-

tive to safeguard the U.S. economy by targeting the schemes that terrorist and criminal networks use to earn, move and store their illicit funds.

Cornerstone builds partnerships by trading information, methodologies, and security tactics with the front-line players – those businesses and industries that manage the very systems terrorists and other criminal organizations seek to exploit.

This partnership allows ICE to provide information and feedback to businesses and industries so that they can take precautions to protect themselves, and to receive information, tips and insights from the businesses

and industries that will be the first to encounter red flags in the course of their normal business.



Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia speaks at a gathering of business and industry leaders during a U.S. Chamber of Commerce roundtable.

ICE DRO DEPORTS “GODFATHER” OF RUSSIAN ORGANIZED CRIME

An illegal alien Russian mobster known as the “Godfather” of Russian organized crime was deported from the United States July 14 along with five other Russian criminal aliens. All six men were flown to Russia on a chartered flight in an operation organized and conducted by ICE’s Detention and Removal Office (DRO).



Vyachaslav Ivankov

Vyachaslav Ivankov, 64, was removed by ICE almost immediately after his release July 13 from the federal prison at Allenwood, Pa., where he had served almost 10 years for a conspiracy and extortion conviction. Ivankov, who also served more than 10 years in a Soviet prison for running an organized crime group in the former Soviet Union, is the reputed head of Russian organized crime and is wanted in Russia for murder in connection with the shooting deaths of two Turkish men in Moscow.

The five other Russians deported on the charter flight were also criminal aliens, with convictions on charges ranging from larceny and fraud to domestic violence and assault. DRO commonly uses charter flights to remove large numbers of aliens to a country or when needed because of security and safety issues.

The charter mission was a joint effort coordinated by DRO Removals at ICE Headquarters. Three DRO officers from the Seattle DRO Office escorted five Russians out of Seattle to Niagara Falls, where they picked up Ivankov and were joined by two Russian law enforcement officers. The flight then proceeded to Moscow, arriving on the morning of July 14.

ROUTINE X-RAY SCAN BY FPS DETECTS MISSILE IN TRUCK

ICE’s Federal Protective Service (FPS) demonstrated recently the effectiveness of the X-ray system used to scan vehicles for potential threats and the officers who use it.

An 18-wheel tractor-trailer truck going through routine X-ray scanning by FPS at the entrance to the Southeast Federal Center in Washington, D.C., on July 1 showed an image that appeared to be a missile packed in the trailer.

FPS officers questioned the driver of the rig after the object was discovered, but the driver said he didn’t know what he was carrying. The truck’s manifest called for deliveries to the Department of Energy and the U.S. Secret Service (USSS), but wasn’t specific on the contents of those deliveries.

Alerted by the X-ray image, FPS officers notified the Federal Bureau of Investigations, USSS, and the Washington, D.C. Police Department’s Explosive Ordinance Division.

Further investigation eventually revealed that the device was in fact a missile, but an inert training missile for the Department of Energy.

“The X-ray system worked, and while this was a false alarm it showed that this system and our people can help protect facilities from real threats,” said Dennis O’Connor, FPS spokesman.

ICE TAKES DOWN UPSCALE SHOP OWNER FOR SELLING FAKE GOODS

ICE special agents arrested designer boutique owner Suresh Mehta, 54, July 12 in San Diego for selling counterfeit designer merchandise at his upscale store “Bene Del Mar.”

ECONOMIC SECURITY

As part of a joint investigation, ICE special agents and San Diego County

District Attorney’s Office investigators executed a state search warrant at Mehta’s store, where he was taken into custody. Special agents seized more than 150 counterfeit items bearing the brand names of Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Gucci, Chanel, Burberry, Coach, Tiffany and Fendi. The seized imposter designer items including handbags, luggage, watches, jewelry, sunglasses and scarves estimated to be valued at \$76,000.

“Trademark fraud poses a serious threat to the American economy and ICE is committed to attacking it head-on,” said Mike Unzueta, Special Agent-in-Charge for ICE in San Diego. “Trafficking in counterfeit merchandise is a serious criminal offense and we will work proactively with law enforcement and private industry to dismantle these criminal schemes.”

During the seven-month investigation, ICE agents met undercover with Mehta. He told agents he sold the counterfeit items like the Vuitton handbags for \$400 each to local residents and tourists.

Nationwide, ICE agents made more than 6,500 seizures of counterfeit merchandise with a domestic value of more than \$94 million last year.

Inside ICE

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for the enforcement of border, economic, infrastructure and transportation security laws.

ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.

Airborne All-Stars



ICE's Air and Marine Operations supported the Houston Police Department by providing air security over Minute Maid Park during last week's Major League Baseball All-Star Game festivities.