



U.S. Immigration
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ICE AGENTS ARREST FRENCH NATIONAL AT TUCSON AIRPORT ON CHILD SEX TOURISM CHARGES

Case is First in Arizona Brought Under Provisions of Recently Passed PROTECT Act

TUCSON — A 30-year-old French national has become the first person in Arizona to face criminal prosecution on child sex tourism charges under the provisions of the recently passed PROTECT Act.

Sebastian Sarraute made his initial appearance in federal court in Tucson late yesterday. Agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested Sarraute at the airport here Wednesday night on allegations he traveled from France to Arizona to have arranged sex with underage girls in Mexico. Sarraute was taken into custody minutes after his connecting flight from Paris touched down in Tucson.

Wednesday's arrest is the culmination of a year-long investigation by ICE. Agents say Sarraute believed he was coming to Tucson to finalize plans to travel to Mexico to have sex with girls who ranged in age from 10 to 14. The formal charge against Sarraute is Travel with Intent to Engage in Sexual Acts with Children (18 U.S.C. 2423(b)).

"Whether a sexual predator is on the Internet exploiting our virtual borders or is an alien who has preyed on children, ICE is using all of its law enforcement authorities to identify them and bring them to justice," said acting special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Tucson Steve Minas Jr. "We are committed to doing everything possible to prevent the exploitation of children both here and abroad."

Sarraute is the first person in Arizona to face child sex tourism charges brought under the provisions of the PROTECT Act, which was signed into law last year. The PROTECT Act substantially strengthened U.S. laws against child sex tourism by boosting the penalties in these types of cases and by modifying the burden of proof requirements for federal prosecutors to bring charges.

Sarraute's arrest is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative launched last year to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. In just over one year, ICE agents have arrested more than 4,000 individuals nationwide. In addition, foreign law enforcement officials, acting on ICE leads, have arrested more than 750 sexual predators in their respective countries.

Sarraute is the seventh individual nationwide arrested under the new child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act. The first case brought under the law involved a 70-year-old Seattle man, Michael Lewis Clark, who was taken into custody by Cambodian authorities after traveling to that country to engage in sex with underage boys. In July 2004, a federal judge in Seattle sentenced Clark to 97 months in jail.

ICE