

Remarks Prepared for
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the
Director Patrick J. Lechleitner
Press Conference on ERO National Operation Outcomes

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Good morning. I'm Patrick J. Lechleitner, Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and I am joined by Dan Bible, the Executive Associate Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations or ERO.

Thank you for joining us here today as we announce the results of a targeted operation that enabled us to arrest potentially dangerous noncitizens in 25 cities across the United States.

Over the course of 11 days, our dedicated and committed law enforcement officers zeroed in on removable, at-large noncitizens who are wanted for — or who have already been convicted of — horrible, almost unspeakable crimes like assault against children, **including sexual assault**, and murder.

Our officers also targeted noncitizens who present dangers to national security, public safety, and border security.

ICE only targets noncitizens for arrest when we can determine that the arrest is a good use of our resources — we operate with limited funding, but enforcing existing immigration laws within the U.S. interior is ERO's top priority.

It's our job to enforce these laws to *keep the American people safe*.

This operation took place in 25 major cities across the country — places where unlawfully present noncitizens were moving freely after being accused or convicted of truly heinous crimes or threatening our peace and security in the United States.

But these communities are now safer thanks to our officers' tireless efforts.

They've worked around the clock, tracking down targets and planning safe, efficient, and effective arrests.

And today, I'm pleased to announce that our officers took 171 potentially dangerous, unlawfully present noncitizens off the streets. Of those, 103 had convictions or pending charges for assault against children, including sexual assault, and 10 had pending charges or convictions of homicide or murder.

ERO is focused on smart, effective immigration enforcement. We know that targeted operations like these help us fulfill our obligations to the American people — and they help minimize the risks to our brave officers and the innocent people living in these communities.

The fact is that at-large arrests can be incredibly dangerous. We can't predict how fugitives will react, so when we're forced to arrest a fugitive who's at-large in the community, our officers plan for every possible outcome.

But one thing is always certain: We will continue to enforce our nation's existing immigration laws within the interior of the United States.

When undocumented noncitizens who are wanted for horrible crimes — including crimes against children, — are roaming the streets, ERO will find them and protect our communities.

I commend the hard work, dedication, and commitment all our officers displayed over the past week and a half.

Without the highly trained professionals in the 25 field offices who took to the streets to participate in this essential operation, we wouldn't be able to proudly announce these results today.

I'd also like to thank our law enforcement partners on the ground in each of the cities where this operation took place. We truly value your partnerships and look forward to helping keep your communities safe.

Thank you.