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### ICE operation in San Diego/Imperial counties results in 115 arrests

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deportation officers arrested 115 individuals for violating federal immigration laws in the San Diego and Imperial counties during a three-day targeted enforcement operation that ended Thursday. Fifty of the immigration violators arrested were convicted criminals and seven others illegally re-entered the U.S. after removal. All but seven of the arrests took place in San Diego County. Seven others had re-entered the United States after being removed on the basis of an Immigration Judge’s final order of removal. Depending on the alien’s criminal history, an alien who illegally reenters the United States, after having been previously removed, has committed a felony punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison.

“This week’s operation targeted public safety threats, such as convicted criminal aliens, individuals with final orders of removal, those who illegally re-entered the country after being removed, and individuals who have otherwise violated our nation’s immigration law,” said Greg Archambeault, field office director for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) in San Diego. “Operations like this reflect the vital work ERO officers do every day to protect the nation, uphold public safety and protect the integrity of our immigration laws and border controls. We will continue to conduct similar operations, while seeking to ultimately deport at-large criminal targets and other immigration fugitives who pose a threat to public safety.”

The arrests include:

- A 43-year-old Mexican national and Center Street Locos gang member in Oceanside, California, who had previously been removed from the U.S. on four prior occasions. He has multiple criminal convictions, including grand theft, controlled substance for sale and driving under the influence.
- A 55-year-old citizen of Kazakhstan who is wanted by authorities in Kazakhstan for alleged tax evasion and embezzlement. He was taken into ICE custody at his Oceanside residence Tuesday pursuant to a “Red Notice” arrest warrant issued by Interpol in September.
- A 52-year-old citizen of Mexico sentenced to 30-months in federal prison in 2009 after being convicted of illegal re-entry after deportation. He has three criminal convictions for spousal abuse, including battery, inflicting injury and threatening to terrorize, and was ordered removed by an immigration judge in 1998. He had previously been removed from the U.S. to Mexico on 10 prior occasions.

**AILA Doc. No. 17041232. (Posted 3/19/18)**

Four of the individuals arrested during this operation will face federal criminal prosecution for illegal re-entry after deportation. The arrestees who are not being federally prosecuted will be processed administratively for removal from the United States. Those who have outstanding orders of removal, or who returned to the United States illegally after being deported, are subject to immediate removal from the country. The remaining individuals are in ICE custody awaiting a hearing before an immigration judge, or pending travel arrangements for removal in the near future.

Of the public safety targets who remain at large, those believed to be residing in or around the San Diego area include:

- A citizen of Mexico convicted of statutory rape, sex with a minor in 2012. He was previously removed from the United States in 2003.
- A citizen of Mexico convicted of domestic violence in 2010 and known associate of the “ESD” street gang. He was last removed from the United States in 2007 and illegally re-entered on an unknown date.

While the vast majorities of cities in America do cooperate with ICE, state laws in California force ICE to focus additional resources to conduct at-large arrest in the community, putting officers, the general public and aliens at greater risk and increase the incidents of collateral arrests.

These arrests were driven by leads developed by the local field office in conjunction with the Pacific Enforcement Response Center and the National Criminal Alien Targeting Center. ICE focuses its enforcement resources on individuals who pose a threat to national security, public safety and border security. However, ICE does not exempt classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement. All of those in violation of the immigration laws may be subject to immigration arrest, detention and, if found removable by final order, removal from the United States. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that arrest aliens indiscriminately.

*Editor’s Note: The arrest statistics provided in this news release represent preliminary data that has been manually reported to ICE headquarters.*

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Last Reviewed/Updated: 03/19/2018