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News Releases

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20 arrested in Chicago area during ICE operation targeting gang members

CHICAGO - Agents with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in close partnership with local law enforcement, arrested 20 suspected gang members during a three-day operation last week. This is the latest local effort in an ongoing national ICE initiative to target foreign-born gang members.

The arrests were made as part of Operation Community Shield, a national initiative whereby ICE partners with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to target the significant public safety threat posed by transnational street gangs. Partnerships with local law enforcement agencies are essential to the success of Operation Community Shield.

The multi-agency operation, which ended Sept. 14, targeted foreign-born gang members and gang associates. All 20 men arrested are documented members of the following street gangs: Latin Kings, Belizean Bloods, Two-Six Boys, Sureño 13s and Latin Dragons.

Sixteen of those arrested have prior criminal convictions. Some of their convictions include: aggravated unlawful use of a weapon, drug possession with intent to distribute, criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, aggravated drunken driving, and retail theft.

The nationality breakdown of those ICE arrested include: 15 from Mexico, four from Belize, and one from Jamaica. Arrests were made in the following Illinois communities: Addison, Bensenville, Carpentersville and Chicago.

Two of those arrested by ICE have been presented for federal prosecution for illegally re-entering the U.S. after being deported, which is a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison. All 20 men are currently in ICE custody on administrative immigration violations, and are pending deportation. ICE does not release the names of those arrested on administrative immigration charges.

"Street gangs operate as criminal organizations and are responsible for committing a significant amount of crime in our communities," said Gary Hartwig, special agent in charge of ICE HSI in Chicago. "ICE works closely with our local law enforcement partners to identify, locate and arrest these gang members in the name of public safety."

ICE was assisted in the operation by the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service and the police departments of Addison, Bensenville and Carpentersville.

Since Operation Community Shield began in February 2005, ICE agents nationwide have arrested more than 18,000 gang members and associates linked to more than 900 different gangs. The National Gang Unit at ICE identifies violent street gangs and develops intelligence on their membership, associates, criminal activities and international movements to deter, disrupt and dismantle gang operations by tracing and seizing cash, weapons and other assets derived from criminal activities.

Through Operation Community Shield, the federal government uses its powerful immigration and customs authorities in a coordinated, national campaign against criminal street gangs in the United States. Transnational street gangs have significant numbers of foreign-born members and are frequently involved in human and contraband smuggling, immigration violations and other crimes with a connection to the border.

For the most up-to-date ICE information, [sign up \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=USDHSICE\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=USDHSICE) for ICE e-mail alerts. You may also visit us on [Twitter \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.twitter.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.twitter.com/wwwicegov) and [YouTube \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov).