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News Releases



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Record number of aliens prosecuted in south Texas in fiscal year 2012 More than 2,400 convicted for illegally re-entering the US after a previous deportation

SAN ANTONIO —; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) efforts led to a record number of aliens being federally prosecuted in south Texas in fiscal year 2012, which ended Sept. 30. U.S. attorneys in the Southern and Western Districts of Texas successfully obtained convictions for 2,417 criminal aliens who illegally re-entered the United States after having been previously deported.

"These prosecutions send an important message to criminal aliens who believe they can treat deportation as little more than a revolving door. That message is, 'there are significant consequences for flagrantly disregarding our laws,'" said Enrique Lucero, field office director for ERO San Antonio.

The San Antonio Violent Criminal Alien Section (VCAS) was established in 2008. Officers assigned to the unit are focused on pursuing prosecution for aliens with felony convictions who have been deported and have illegally re-entered the United States. Of the cases referred by the San Antonio VCAS since 2008, nearly 6,800 federal convictions have been obtained. Any alien who is deported based on a felony conviction, and who illegally re-enters the United States, commits a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

Following are three examples of aliens who have been federally prosecuted by San Antonio's VCAS unit for illegally re-entering the United States after having been previously deported:

- A 35-year-old Mexican man, who is a convicted felon, was sentenced in October to seven years in federal prison. Some of his prior convictions include: possessing a firearm/knife during commission of felony, drug trafficking, and hit-and-run.
- A 34-year-old Mexican man, who is a convicted felon and had been deported multiple times, was sentenced in August to eight years in federal prison. Some of his prior convictions include: burglary, alien smuggling and possessing a controlled substance.
- A 40-year-old Mexican man, who is a convicted felon, was sentenced in July to five years in federal prison. Some of his prior convictions include: aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, assault causing bodily injury to a family member, and drunken driving.

In central and south Texas, 2,003 aliens were federally prosecuted in fiscal year 2010, and 2,370 aliens in fiscal year 2011. According to ERO, the local increase in felony immigration cases stems from greater investigative and prosecutorial resources dedicated to such offenses.

Previously deported aliens targeted for criminal prosecution are those who have been re-arrested in the Southern or Western Districts of Texas. Historically, most aliens federally prosecuted for "re-entry after deportation" usually receive sentences of between two to 10 years in federal prison. There is no parole in the federal prison system.

ICE is focused on smart, effective immigration enforcement that targets serious criminal aliens who present the greatest risk to the security of our communities, such as those charged with or convicted of homicide, rape, robbery, kidnapping, major drug offenses and threats to national security. ICE also prioritizes the arrest and removal of those who game the immigration system including immigration fugitives or those criminal aliens who have been previously deported and illegally re-entered the country.

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