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Brazilian Husband and Wife Plead Guilty in Florida to Human Smuggling

WASHINGTON – Two Brazilian nationals pleaded guilty today in Miami to smuggling undocumented migrants to the United States for profit, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Wifredo A. Ferrer of the Southern District of Florida and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Director John Morton.

Juliana Rose Tome-Froes, 36, and her husband, Fabio Rodrigues Froes, 49, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge Federico A. Moreno in the Southern District of Florida to six counts and two counts, respectively, of bringing and attempting to bring aliens to the United States for commercial advantage and private financial gain.

According to plea documents, from at least October 2008 until approximately September 2010, the defendants organized, operated and managed a human smuggling network that spanned from Brazil to France, England, The Bahamas and the United States. The defendants met with undocumented migrants and negotiated forms of payment to be smuggled into the United States. Before the undocumented migrants departed Brazil, the defendants instructed them to act like tourists and explained that the itinerary through Europe would support a tourist cover story. In exchange for approximately $16,000, Tome-Froes, with assistance from Froes, arranged air transportation from Brazil to Paris, then London and Nassau, Bahamas. Tome-Froes arranged the undocumented migrants' lodging in Paris and Nassau, and then instructed them to fly to Freeport, Bahamas, where they waited for a boat to transport them to the United States. For the final leg into the United States, Tome-Froes coordinated with various individuals in South Florida to pilot a small boat to Freeport, which picked up the undocumented migrants and transported them to the United States.

At sentencing, scheduled for March 21, 2013, Juliana Tome-Froes faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a $250,000 fine, and Fabio Froes faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Jay Bauer of the Criminal Division's Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Marton Gyires of the Southern District of Florida.

The investigation was conducted by ICE Homeland Security Investigations in Miami.

13-073 Criminal Division

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