



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

## News Releases

June 5, 2008

### **ICE executes search warrant targeting California farm labor contractor**

#### ***Two foremen charged criminally; 32 farm workers arrested on immigration violations***

EL CENTRO, Calif. - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents executed a federal search warrant yesterday afternoon as part of an ongoing investigation targeting an Imperial Valley-area farm labor contractor, arresting two of the company's foremen on criminal charges and another 32 employees on administrative immigration violations.

The search warrant, which remains under seal because the investigation is ongoing, was executed at the business office of Boss 4 Packing in Heber, Calif., a locally-owned company that provides contract workers to the farming industry in the Imperial Valley.

In conjunction with yesterday's search, ICE agents arrested two of the company's foremen on federal criminal charges for misusing Social Security numbers to employ illegal alien workers at Boss 4 Packing.

Foreman Carlos Ramos-Galdamez, a 49-year-old citizen of El Salvador, was taken into custody by ICE agents late yesterday near his residence in Brawley, Calif. The second foreman, Jouanni Francisco Perez-Tinoco, a 31-year-old illegal alien from Honduras, was arrested while working in the fields nearby.

Last month, in a separate but related case, ICE agents arrested Francisco Zapot-Palacios, a 38-year-old Mexican national who also works as a foreman for Boss 4, for harboring illegal alien workers. Zapot was arrested May 9 at his residence in Brawley, Calif., and later indicted. According to court documents, Zapot-Palacios provided housing for the illegal alien workers employed by the company.

"Those who seek to circumvent our nation's hiring laws can expect to pay a price for their actions," said Miguel Unzueta, special agent in charge of the ICE office of investigations in San Diego. "These practices not only harm law-abiding businesses, they also serve to fuel illegal immigration."

In addition to the criminal arrests, ICE agents took 32 illegal aliens employed by Boss 4 Packing into custody on administrative immigration violations. Most of the workers were arrested in the

Brawley area. The group of seven women and 25 men included foreign nationals from Mexico and Honduras. All of these individuals were interviewed by ICE and medical staff from ICE's Division of Immigration Health Services to determine if they had any medical, caregiver, or other humanitarian issues. The interviews aid ICE in deciding whether individuals will be detained, or released on humanitarian grounds, while they await an immigration hearing.

As a result of those interviews, one female worker was released yesterday on humanitarian grounds and scheduled for a follow-up removal processing interview. Of the remaining workers, 18 have been repatriated to Mexico, 12 are being held as material witnesses in the ongoing investigation, and one underage worker was turned over to relatives.

ICE has set up a local phone number family members of the arrested workers can call with questions about their relative's detention status and the removal process. The phone number is: 760-337-3780.

Since its establishment in 2003, ICE has dramatically enhanced its efforts to combat the unlawful employment of illegal aliens in this country. ICE's comprehensive strategy for worksite enforcement is aimed at promoting national security and public safety, protecting critical infrastructure, and ensuring fair labor standards.

So far in fiscal year 2008, ICE has made more than 3,700 arrests in connection with worksite enforcement investigations, including 850 involving criminal violations. In fiscal year 2007, ICE made more than 4,900 arrests in connection with worksite enforcement investigations, including 863 involving criminal violations. That represents a 45-fold increase in criminal worksite arrests compared to fiscal year 2001. In addition, ICE obtained more than \$31 million in criminal fines, restitutions and civil judgments in fiscal year 2007 as a result of worksite related enforcement actions.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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