

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

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47 arrested in New England ICE-led gang enforcement action

BOSTON - A total of 47 gang members and individuals with gang ties, including many with criminal records, are facing new criminal charges or removal from the United States following a three-month anti-gang surge led by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

The arrests are the result of a multi-agency effort by the ICE-HSI Operation Community Shield Task Force (OCSTF), comprised of about 20 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies from the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine. Using ICE's transnational reach and broad legal authorities to combat the proliferation of criminal street gangs, ICE targets those individuals posing the greatest threat to our national security and public safety by focusing on foreign-born members of these violent street gangs.

Those arrested during this anti-gang surge included 28 known gang members consisting of Bloods, MS 13, 18th Street, Latin Kings, and Vatos Locos. Of the 47 individuals arrested, 24 were arrested on local/state warrants in conjunction with state and local police. The other 23 arrested were citizens and nationals of various foreign countries. These targets had criminal histories of violent crimes including attempted murder, car jacking, assault and battery with dangerous weapons, assault to rape, possession of firearms, and narcotics distribution.

Those foreign nationals who are not being prosecuted on criminal charges are being processed for deportation.

"ICE and our law enforcement partners in New England are determined to rid our streets of criminals such as these," said Bruce M. Foucart, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston. "Transnational gang members and their associates are on notice that they will be arrested and brought to justice."

Among those arrested are the following individuals:

- A 30-year-old citizen of Cambodia and national of Thailand, who is a member of the Asian Boyz gang who was ordered deported in August 2001. He failed to comply with his removal order and a warrant of deportation was entered against him. His criminal record dates back to 1998 and includes convictions for armed assault to murder, multiple counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, armed robbery, and carjacking.
- A 24-year-old U.S. citizen and member of the Latin Kings whose criminal record dates back to 1999, and includes 37 adult arraignments with such convictions as knowingly receiving stolen property, multiple counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and possession of a firearm. The man was arrested on outstanding warrants for heroin and cocaine distribution.
- A 23-year-old citizen and national of Cape Verde who entered the United States as a U.S. permanent resident in December 1991. He is a high-ranking member of the Gangster Disciples gang with a criminal history dating back to 2000 and includes arrests and convictions for possessing firearms without a permit, multiple counts of narcotics distribution, and assault and battery. He also has pending charges of armed robbery, knowingly receiving stolen property, and possessing firearms without proper identification.
- A 29-year-old citizen and national of the Dominican Republic, who entered the United States as a U.S. permanent resident in April 1994, is a high-ranking member of the Bloods gang. His criminal history dates back to 1999 and includes arrests and convictions for multiple counts of possessing controlled substances, malicious destruction of property, threatening, operating under the influence of narcotics and alcohol, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and possessing a firearm without identification.
- A 22-year-old citizen and national of Somalia, who entered the United States seeking asylum and then became involved with the True Somali Bloods, which conducts various criminal activities in the Portland, Maine, area. He was administratively arrested on Aug. 18, 2010 following his conviction for unlawful trafficking in narcotics. His arrests and convictions began in April 2006 for refusing to submit to arrest and violations of conditions of release. In May 2006, he was then arrested for violating conditions of release and again in December 2006 for unlawful trafficking in scheduled narcotics, and for possession of narcotics. His most recent narcotic-related arrests occurred in November 2009, also for unlawful trafficking in scheduled narcotics, violating conditions of release and refusing to submit to arrest.
- A 25-year-old citizen and national of Somalia who entered the United States seeking asylum and has since adjusted to become a refugee. He is a member of the True Somali Blood street gang involved in criminal gang activities in the Portland, Maine, area. His criminal history began in October 2003 which includes arrests for carrying concealed weapons, two charges for criminal mischief, criminal threatening with a weapon, assault, as well as driving offenses. He was arrested during this operation on a Maine Drug Enforcement warrant.
- A 25-year-old derivative U.S. citizen who was born in Somalia and is member of the True Somali Blood street gang, is also involved in criminal gang activities in the Portland, Maine, area. His criminal history began in 1999 for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and also includes additional arrests for assault, terrorizing, violating conditions of release twice, and disorderly conduct. He was also arrested for aggravated drunken driving during the ICE operation.

The ICE enforcement surge in New England is part of ICE-HSI's ongoing anti-gang nationwide initiative known as Operation Community Shield which began in February 2005. Since then ICE agents nationwide have arrested more than 18,000 gang members and their associates.

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.

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