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## News Releases

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FEBRUARY 7, 2011 SAN ANTONIO, TX

### Salvadoran national sentenced to 15 years in prison for smuggling deaths

SAN ANTONIO - A Salvadoran national was sentenced on Thursday to 15 years in prison for his role in a 2008 illegal alien smuggling operation that resulted in three deaths, announced U.S. Attorney John E. Murphy, Western District of Texas. The investigation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

U.S. District Judge Xavier Rodriguez sentenced Marcos Guevara-Rodriguez, 21, a citizen of El Salvador, to 15 years in prison for his role in the alien smuggling death of three Mexican nationals. Guevara-Rodriguez pleaded guilty Oct. 28, 2010, to one count of conspiring to transport illegal aliens in the United States for profit resulting in death, and two counts of aiding and abetting the transportation of illegal aliens for profit resulting in death. In addition, Judge Rodriguez ordered Guevara-Rodriguez to pay \$370,889.86 in restitution. After completing his prison term he will be turned over to ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) and placed into removal proceedings.

According to the court records, on Nov. 20, 2008, Natalia police officers and Texas Department of Public Safety troopers attempted to stop two vehicles traveling northbound on Interstate 35 in Medina County for suspected traffic violations. One vehicle, being driven by Guevara-Rodriguez's co-defendant, 40-year-old Salvadoran Ronald Jonny Diaz, eventually pulled over near I-35 and Hwy 471, but not before Diaz slowed down enough to allow several presumed illegal aliens to jump out of the car.

Guevara-Rodriguez continued to travel northbound on I-35 and eventually led authorities on a high-speed chase - reaching speeds of about 140 miles per hour - for several miles before crashing into a guardrail on an overpass. As a result, two passengers died at the scene of the accident; a third passenger died 17 days later at University Hospital in San Antonio. All three were illegal aliens from Mexico.

Co-defendant Diaz, who pleaded guilty to the same charges on Sept. 16, 2010, is scheduled to be sentenced on March 9, 2011, before Judge Rodriguez. Diaz faces up to ten years in federal prison.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sarah Wannarka and Matt Lathrop, Western District of Texas, prosecuted this case.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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