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## News Releases



APRIL 24, 2013 BALTIMORE, MD

### **Leaders in Baltimore document mill sentenced to prison 9 defendants sold thousands of fraudulent government identification documents**

BALTIMORE – Two Mexican nationals unlawfully residing in Baltimore were sentenced to federal prison Tuesday and Wednesday for conspiring to operate a document mill in Baltimore and selling thousands of fraudulent government identification documents manufactured as part of the conspiracy.

The investigation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Baltimore and the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General with the assistance of the U.S. State Department Diplomatic Security Service, Washington Field Office; the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, Investigation and Security Services Division; and the Baltimore County Police Department.

"Document fraud poses a severe threat to national security and puts the security of our communities at risk because it creates a vulnerability that may enable terrorists, criminals and illegal aliens to gain entry to and remain in the United States," said HSI Baltimore Special Agent in Charge William Winter. "This investigation resulted in the dismantlement of a document fraud criminal organization based out of Maryland and the arrest of its leaders. Homeland Security Investigations will move aggressively to investigate and bring to justice those who potentially compromise the integrity of America's legal immigration system."

Roberto Morales-Perez, aka Piza, 27, was sentenced April 24 by U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. to six years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for conspiring to operate a document mill in the 200 block of South Broadway in Baltimore (Broadway Territory). On April 23, Judge Quarles sentenced the brother of Morales-Perez, Ivan Altamirano-Perez, aka Elmer, 33, to 97 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release for conspiracy to commit fraud, fraud and misuse of immigration documents, social security fraud, and identification document fraud, in the same scheme. Both face removal from the United States upon the completion of their criminal sentences.

According to their plea agreements and other court documents, responsibility for manufacturing identity documents including permanent resident cards and social security cards rotated among various individuals. From June 2008 through May 2010, Morales-Perez and Altamirano-Perez received the income from manufacturing the identity documents. Beginning in May 2010 and continuing until their arrests, the Perez brothers shared the territory and income with Miguel Reyes-Ontiveros. The location of the manufacturing operation changed frequently to avoid detection.

In addition to manufacturing the documents, the document mill operators sold the documents themselves or through salesmen. The defendants used a group of at least 10 individuals to sell and distribute the fake identity documents. The documents were offered for sale and distributed in and around the 200 block of South Broadway.

According to their plea agreements, the salesmen solicited individuals in the Broadway territory to purchase the fake identification documents, either in person or by distributing business cards. The salesman would negotiate a price with the buyer, usually between \$130 and \$160, and obtain a picture and the information, which the buyer wanted on the identification card. The salesman would then call in the order to the operator who was working that week. The completed identity document would subsequently be provided to the salesman to be sold to the buyer.

The defendants manufactured and sold 9,990 fraudulent identification documents for which they received approximately \$1.68 million.

All nine defendants have pleaded guilty in this case. Miguel Reyes-Ontiveros, 42, of Baltimore, one of the document mill operators, was sentenced to 57 months in prison. All of the defendants are in the United States illegally and face deportation upon the completion of their sentences.

A defendant in a related case, Victor Lopez Escamilla, was convicted by a jury of manufacturing and trafficking in counterfeit identity documents, social security number cards and immigration identity documents and was sentenced to 97 months in prison.

Anyone who has information on this type of fraud may contact ICE via its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423) or by visiting [www.ice.gov/tips](http://www.ice.gov/tips) (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/forms/hsi-tips/tips.asp>).

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Tamera L. Fine and Judson T. Mihok for the District of Maryland.

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

ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423 or complete our [tip form \(http://www.ice.gov/tips\)](http://www.ice.gov/tips).