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News Releases



JULY 11, 2013 EL PASO, TX

US and Mexico resume interior repatriation initiative

EL PASO, Texas — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Mexican Ministry of the Interior announced Thursday the continuation of the Interior Repatriation Initiative (IRI), a joint agreement between the governments of the United States and Mexico to provide humane, safe and orderly repatriation of Mexican nationals.

The goal of the IRI, which began as a pilot program in 2012 and was signed as a permanent initiative April 18, is to return Mexican nationals to the interior of Mexico. Having this framework will reduce recidivism and border violence by returning Mexican nationals to their cities of origin, where there is a higher likelihood that they will reintegrate themselves back into their communities, rather than fall victim to human trafficking or other crimes in Mexican border towns.

ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) will provide air transportation to Benito Juarez International Airport in Mexico City and the government of Mexico will provide additional transportation to the cities of origin.

Individuals participating in this initiative are flown from throughout the U.S. to the Otero County Processing Center in Chaparral, N.M., and transported to local airports.

The first 2013 repatriation flight of 133 Mexican nationals departed El Paso International Airport July 11.

Headquartered in Mesa, Ariz., ICE Air Operations has supported ERO since 2006 by providing air transportation and removal coordination services to ERO field offices nationwide. Staffed by ERO officers, these air charters enable the agency to repatriate large groups of deportees in an efficient, expeditious and humane manner.

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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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