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Worksite Enforcement
08/07/2019

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ICE executes federal search warrants at multiple Mississippi locations





JACKSON, Miss. – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) executed multiple federal criminal search warrants at seven agricultural processing plants across Mississippi Wednesday morning as part of an ongoing HSI worksite enforcement criminal investigation.

In addition to executing federal search warrants and seizing business records pertaining to the ongoing federal criminal investigation, deportation officers with ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) in partnership with HSI detained approximately 680 removable aliens who were unlawfully working at the plants.

All the unlawfully present foreign nationals arrested Wednesday are being interviewed by ICE staff to record any potential mitigating humanitarian situations. Based on these interviews, and consideration of their criminality and prior immigration history, ICE is determining on a case-by-case basis based on the totality of the circumstances which individuals will be detained and which persons may be released from custody at present. In all cases, all the illegal aliens encountered as part of this operation are either being placed into removal proceedings before the federal immigration courts, and for those who already received due process and have been ordered removed, processed for removal from the U.S.

A 24-hour toll-free hotline is available for family members of those arrested in this operation to address questions about their detention location and status, and the removal process. This hotline operates in English and Spanish; the phone number is 1-855-479-0502.

This HSI-led operation was conducted in coordination with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Mississippi, of which U.S. Attorney D. Michael Hurst Jr. will prosecute any resulting federal criminal charges.

HSI is the federal law enforcement agency responsible for upholding the laws established by the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which requires employers to verify the identity and work eligibility of individuals they hire. These laws help protect jobs for U.S. citizens and lawful U.S. residents, eliminate unfair competitive advantages for companies that unlawfully hire an illegal workforce, and strengthen public safety and national security.

Unauthorized workers often use stolen identities of legal U.S. workers, which can profoundly damage for years the identity-theft victim’s credit, medical records and other aspects of their everyday life.

HSI’s worksite enforcement investigators help combat worker exploitation, illegal wages, child labor and other illegal practices. Worksite enforcement investigations often involve additional criminal activity, such as alien smuggling, human trafficking, money laundering, document fraud, worker exploitation and/or substandard wage and working conditions.

In addition to [worksite enforcement](#) operations like this one, HSI also uses [I-9 audits](#) to create a culture of compliance among employers. [In July 2018, ICE announced a two-phase operation under this effort.](#)

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