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Enforcement and Removal

09/28/2020

ICE announces more targeted arrests of criminal aliens in Mecklenburg County, many shielded by North Carolina non-cooperation policies

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced Monday that 12 criminal aliens were arrested in as part of a targeted enforcement operation by its Fugitive Operations Teams in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, from Sept. 21 to 25. Six of these arrests included criminals with active ICE detainers who instead of being transferred into federal custody were released back into the community where they were free to reoffend until their capture.

ICE has repeatedly asked local jurisdictions to reconsider non-cooperation policies enacted in recent years because those policies put politics before public safety and release criminals back into communities where they are free to reoffend.

ICE maintains that cooperation with local law enforcement is essential to protecting public safety, and the agency aims to work cooperatively with local jurisdictions to ensure that criminal aliens are not released into U.S. communities to commit additional crimes. Unfortunately, Mecklenburg County and others continue to not only refuse to honor ICE detainers but to even notify ICE when it is releasing a potential public safety threat back into the community.

“We are here because we cannot stand by idly while knowing the public is being misled about the role ICE plays in keeping the public safe,” said ICE Executive Associate Director Henry Lucero. “The fact is local policies prohibiting agencies from working with ICE put you in danger and waste police resources. The public should hold its leaders accountable and demand to know what type of criminals are being released from local custody instead of turned over to ICE.”

Criminal aliens arrested after Mecklenburg refused cooperation



- Name: Jose Ruiz-Quintero
- Criminal charges: Assault with a Deadly Weapon
Inflicting Serious Bodily Injury
- MCSO arrest date: June 15, 2020
- Detainer issued: June 16, 2020
- Immigration status: Nicaraguan, illegally present in the U.S. – ordered removed by immigration judge August 1, 2019
- **Detainer refused:** Released from Mecklenburg County custody June 16 despite detainer. ICE located and arrested on September 23.

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- Name: Elder Amador-Lopez
- Criminal charges: Assault on a Female, DWI
- MCSO arrest date: August 23, 2020
- Detainer issued: August 23, 2020
- Immigration status: Guatemalan, illegally present in the U.S. – previously removed in in March 2014 and April 2014
- **Detainer refused:** Released from Mecklenburg County custody August 27 despite detainer. ICE located and arrested on September 24.



- Name: Emmanuel Guillen-Gonzalez
- Criminal charges: Breaking and Entering, Larceny
- MCSO arrest date: July 21, 2020
- Detainer issued: July 21, 2020
- Immigration status: Nicaraguan, illegally present in the U.S. – ordered removed by immigration judge March 29, 2018
- **Detainer refused:** Released from Mecklenburg County custody July 21 despite detainer. ICE located and arrested on September 22.

“It is time to put aside the political rhetoric and look at the facts – and the fact is, people are hurt and victimized because of jurisdictions that refuse to cooperate with ICE in what should be our shared mission to protect the public,” said Lucero.

While making clear the consequences of uncooperative jurisdictions, Lucero also commended law enforcement partners who do work with ICE because it is much safer for all involved if ICE officers take custody in the controlled environment of another law enforcement agency. Approximately 70% of the arrests ICE makes happen after ICE is notified about an alien being released from local jails or state prisons. In fiscal year 2019, ICE has lodged more than 160,000 detainers with local law enforcement agencies.

Lucero reiterated that ICE is sworn to uphold the federal immigration laws enacted by Congress, and that the agency will carry out its sworn mission, with or without the cooperation of local law enforcement agencies.

Nationally, approximately 90% of all people arrested by ICE during fiscal year 2019 either had a criminal conviction, a pending criminal charge, had illegally re-entered the United States after being previously removed (a federal felony), or were an immigration fugitive subject to a final order of removal.

Specific to Charlotte, in fiscal year 2018, 473 criminal aliens were transferred into ICE custody pursuant to an immigration detainer. In 2019, since the enactment of Mecklenburg’s non-cooperation policy these individuals are instead released into the community where they are free to reoffend until ICE is able to locate and arrest them, or until they commit additional preventable crimes in the community resulting in their arrest again by other law enforcement.

Despite the challenges this policy creates, ICE remains committed to enforcing federal law, and residents should continue to expect a more visible ICE presence in Charlotte while this non-cooperation policy remains in effect, as ICE has no choice but to conduct more at-large arrests in local neighborhoods and at worksites, which will inevitably result in additional collateral arrests instead of arrests at the jail where enforcement is safer for everyone involved.

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