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Enforcement and Removal

11/19/2020

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### ICE targets aliens who failed to depart US voluntarily in nationwide operation 'Broken Promise'

WASHINGTON – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Senior Official Performing the Duties of Director Tony Pham announced Thursday in McAllen, Texas, an ongoing national enforcement effort called “Operation Broken Promise,” targeting for arrest and removal aliens who promised to voluntarily leave the country, versus face a formal deportation, but never did.

Since Nov. 2, ICE Enforcement and Removal (ERO) officers have arrested more than 150 individuals who failed to depart after being granted voluntary departure. About 86% of those arrested also had criminal convictions or pending charges.

“ICE takes seriously its obligation to enforce our nation’s immigration laws,” said ICE Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director Tony H. Pham. “Those being arrested in this targeted operation have broken their promise to the U.S. government, and we are enforcing the consequences of that dishonesty.”

Voluntary departure is typically requested by the alien and granted by an immigration judge, where the alien is granted about 60 to 120 days to arrange their own departure, versus facing a formal deportation and the barriers to readmission that it carries. Voluntary departures benefit U.S. taxpayers by lowering the costs of deportations.

When an alien fails to depart the country per the agreement, they become subject to a final removal order which is then carried out as a formal deportation by ICE. In addition to the barrier on readmission, an illegal re-entry after a formal deportation is a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

ICE does not exempt classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement. All those in violation of immigration law may be subject to arrest, detention and, if found removable by final order, removal from the United States. ICE takes many factors into account when targeting and arresting individuals, including their criminal and immigration history.

Every day as part of routine operations, ICE targets and arrests aliens who commit crimes, and other individuals who have violated our nation’s immigration laws. While being mindful of the current pandemic, ICE is continuing to conduct its critical public safety and immigration enforcement mission, while taking efforts to minimize the risks to officers, aliens, and the public related to COVID-19.

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