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ICE Tulsa officers arrest 22 criminal aliens during 6-week local operation



ICE file photo

TULSA, Okla. – Officers from the Tulsa office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) arrested 22 criminal aliens and immigration violators during a six-week operation ending May 16.

Those arrested are from the following countries: Mexico (16), Guatemala (5) and Turkey (1).

Following are summaries of three of the worst offenders arrested by the Tulsa ERO officers during this operation:

- On April 24, a 24-year-old man from Mexico, wanted by the Mexican government for attempted homicide in Zacatecas, Mexico, was arrested in Tulsa. After being deported to Mexico in August 2016, he allegedly attempted a homicide in Zacatecas, Mexico, in September 2016. He fled Mexico by illegally re-entering the United States. He is currently awaiting removal to Mexico.

- On April 10, a 34-year-old previously deported man from Mexico was arrested in Tulsa. He was last deported in 2011 following his conviction for criminal sexual conduct involving a child. He illegally re-entered the United States. On May 1, 2017, federal grand jury in the Northern District of Oklahoma indicted him for illegally re-entering the United States after being deported.
- On May 10, a 42-year-old man from Mexico was arrested in Stilwell, Oklahoma. He has felony convictions of conspiracy to commit robbery, reckless discharge of a firearm, child endangerment, and possessing a controlled drug.

Any alien who enters, attempts to enter, or is found in the United States after being removed commits a felony punishable by up to two years in federal prison, if convicted; 10 years if previously convicted of three or more drug misdemeanors, or crimes against a person misdemeanors, or for a felony offense; and 20 years if for previously convicted for an aggravated felony.

“The operations that our ERO officers conduct on a daily basis to identify, locate and arrest criminal aliens have a significant positive impact on public safety in Tulsa and in communities nationwide,” said Simona L. Flores, field office director for ERO Dallas, which also oversees the state of Oklahoma. “Some of the criminals we encounter have fled to the United States to hide from their crimes in their home countries.”

The aliens arrested during this operation who have outstanding orders of removal, or who illegally re-entered the United States after being deported, are subject to immediate deportation after they complete any standing prison sentences imposed after their criminal convictions. Other aliens arrested during this operation were entered into removal proceedings, or are currently pending travel arrangements for removal in the future.

The Tulsa-based ICE ERO office was established in 2008 as part of an initiative to reduce the fugitive alien population in the United States, which later included previously removed aliens and removable criminal aliens.

The ERO Fugitive Operations Team in Tulsa is one of many such nationwide teams that focuses on aliens who pose a serious threat to national security or public safety, including members of transnational street gangs, child sex offenders, and aliens with prior convictions for violent crimes. The enforcement operations conducted by this Tulsa team are just one facet of the Department of Homeland Security's broader strategy to heighten the federal government's effectiveness at identifying and removing dangerous criminal aliens from the United States.

In fiscal year 2016, ICE conducted 240,255 removals nationwide. Ninety-two percent of individuals removed from the interior of the United States had previously been convicted of a criminal offense.

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