

June 21, 2012

30 sought in illegal driver's license scheme

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) are searching for 30 suspects in five states after three indictments were unsealed in federal court alleging their involvement in a scheme to illegally obtain driver's licenses from New Mexico.

According to the indictments, the defendants were in the United States illegally, and traveled from South Carolina and surrounding areas to New Mexico to apply for New Mexico driver's licenses. The indictments set out that New Mexico, unlike South Carolina, does not require proof of U.S. citizenship to obtain a driver's license. It further sets out that the defendants obtained false proof of New Mexico residency, such as utility bills, and provided them to the New Mexico Motor Vehicle Department when applying for driver's licenses in New Mexico. Those defendants would then return to the South Carolina area, and co-defendants living in New Mexico would later mail them the fraudulently applied for and obtained New Mexico driver's licenses.

Charged in one indictment are: Alma Rosa Ortiz-Calzada, age 54, and Jesus Ortiz, age 29, both of Charleston, S.C.; Ivon Baray-Luna, age 31, Alfred Padilla, age 47, Victor Alvarez, age 25 and Elizabeth Lopez a/k/a "La Guera" a/k/a "Betty," age 42, all of Albuquerque, N.M.; Alfredo Saenz, age 39, of Rio Rancho, N.M. and Yusimy Valdez a/k/a "Yusimi" a/k/a "Lusimy" and Gavy Lnu, both with unknown ages and residences.

A second indictment charges: Marcos Medina-Zavaleta, age 23, of Hanahan, S.C.; Concepcion Prieto-Juarez, age 29, Alejandra Torricos-Cuellar, age 20, Juan Pablo Valladares-Martinez, age 31 and Gustavo Torricos-Vargas, age 41, all of Charleston, S.C.; Jose Alvarez-Robles, age 30, of Ladson, S.C.; Jorge Alvarez-Chavez, age 32 and Luis Alvarez-Robles, age 22, both of North Charleston, S.C.; Gonzalo Garcia-Gines, age 29, of Knoxville, Tenn.; Salvador Hernandez-Santillan, age 36, of Summerville, S.C.; and Fabian Sanchez-Hernandez, age 32 and Horacio Jasso-Hernandez, age 35, both of Mt. Pleasant, S.C.

A third indictment charges: Bulmaro Perez-Perez, age 35, of Doraville, Ga.; Darco Jordan-Tapia, age 32 and Marisol Pantoja-Loredo, age 23, both of Charleston, S.C.; Roberto Trejo-Lopez, age 22 and Arturo Trejo-Lopez, age 18, both of Chantilly, Va.; Ruben Trejo-Lopez, age 24, of Centreville, Va.; Jesus Octaviano-Leyva, age 40, of Charlotte, N.C.; Gabriel Sotelo, age 42, of North Charleston, S.C.; and Jose Luis Hernandez-Delgado, age 28, of Knoxville, Tenn.

The indictments allege conspiracy to transfer false identification documents and to transport illegal aliens; producing and transferring false identification documents; and, transporting illegal aliens. Conspiracy to transfer, and to produce, false identity documents, as well as the transfer and production of those documents, each carry a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment. Conspiracy to transport illegal aliens, as well as transporting illegal aliens, both carry a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment.

The indictments are the result of an investigation conducted by HSI and the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathan Williams of the Charleston office is prosecuting the case.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1206/120621charleston.htm>