



January 9, 2012
El Paso, TX

ICE HSI agents arrest fugitive, member of Juarez kidnapping ring
Cesar 'El Chilin' Vega-Muñoz was working at local restaurant

EL PASO, Texas — A cook at an area fast-food restaurant remains in federal custody after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents arrested him Dec. 27 for illegally re-entering the country after being deported.

Cesar "El Chilin" Vega-Muñoz, 22, had a preliminary and detention hearing Jan. 6 in which U.S. Magistrate Judge David Guaderrama denied him bond, ordering him to remain in custody pending further judicial proceedings.

Vega-Muñoz, who was living illegally in Socorro, Texas, is charged with re-entry after deportation. He was previously deported to Mexico in April 2009 after he tried to enter at the Ysleta Port of Entry using someone else's entry documents.

He is wanted in Ciudad Juarez for escape and other charges. He was convicted of kidnapping and sentenced to 42 years in prison.

According to an investigation by ICE HSI's Public Safety Group in El Paso, Mexican authorities in Ciudad Juarez arrested Vega-Muñoz in September 2009. He allegedly belongs to the kidnapping ring "El Neto," a criminal organization targeting business people in the Juarez area.

In December 2010, the van in which Vega-Muñoz was being transported from Cereso prison to a court appearance was ambushed, and Vega-Muñoz escaped during the ensuing gunfight.

ICE HSI agents developed information that led them to identify, locate and arrest Vega-Muñoz outside a fast-food restaurant on Dec. 27, in the 10000 block of Alameda Avenue in Socorro, Texas, where he worked as a cook.

"HSI special agents aggressively pursue individuals who pose a threat to public safety, especially criminal aliens who try to blend into our communities to elude justice in their home countries," said Dennis A. Ulrich, special agent in charge of ICE HSI in El Paso.

If convicted of the re-entry charge, Vega-Muñoz faces up to 20 years in federal prison. Once he completes any awarded prison sentence, he will be returned to ICE custody and removed to Mexico.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1201/120109elpaso.htm>