



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

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Public Affairs  
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**ALIEN SMUGGLERS SENTENCED TO 12 - 14 YEARS FOR THEIR ROLES IN HOLDING 31  
ILLEGAL ALIENS HOSTAGE**

TUCSON, Ariz. – Victor Saucedo-Parra, 34, of Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico, was sentenced to 14 years in federal prison; and Jaime Figueroa-Lopez, 36, of Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico, was sentenced to 12 years in federal prison on August 27, 2009, by U.S. District Judge Frank R. Zapata. On May 12, 2009, both pleaded guilty to Hostage Taking and Brandishing a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence.

On March 31, 2009, Tucson Police Department officers responded to a report that 30 to 40 illegal aliens were being held hostage at a suspected drop house in the 800 block of W. Valencia by individuals with an AK-47 assault rifle. The officers detained those inside the house and observed an assault rifle with two taped magazines in plain view. The individuals inside the drop house stated they had been at the residence between four and 15 days, and when they arrived, their property, identification and shoes were taken from them by the “coyotes.” They all indicated that the original smuggling fee of \$1,000 - \$1,500 was raised to \$2,800 per person. The illegal aliens were held at the house by use of force and fear and were not to be released until their family members were able to pay the increased smuggling fee.

Agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement recovered several items in the house, including a MAK-90 assault rifle, a 9-mm FEG pistol, two rifle and one pistol magazines, a knife, one set of handcuffs and several cell phones. Some of the weapons were loaded with ammunition. Agents detained a total of 36 individuals in the stash house and determined that 31 of the individuals were illegal aliens being held against their will. Agents determined that the other five individuals, Saucedo-Parra, Figueroa-Lopez and three co-defendants, were responsible for holding the aliens hostage. Material witnesses identified Saucedo-Parra as “El Jefe” or the leader. Saucedo-Parra admitted that he knew his co-defendants were alternating carrying the rifle and pistol around the house and in the presence of the aliens. Saucedo-Parra also admitted that when one of the illegal aliens complained about the fee increase, he put his foot on his chest and threatened to shoot him in the head and throw him in a canal if he did not come up with the smuggling fee. This was said in front of the other aliens to force them to comply with demands and not make any trouble.

Figueroa-Lopez was identified as one of the guards who carried the assault rifle and helped cook meals at the residence. Figueroa-Lopez gave the aliens broth and made them pay extra money for crackers and soda. He admitted to helping detain the aliens by carrying the rifle around the house and in the presence of the aliens. The remaining co-defendants’ cases are still pending: Jesus Manual Quinones-Camacho is set for sentencing on September 17, 2009; Paulino Rios-Ledesma is scheduled for trial on October 27, 2009; and Martin Chavarin-Serrano does not currently have a trial date set. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Tucson Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Serra M. Tsethlikai and Kimberly E. Hopkins, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-09-00737-TUC-FRZ  
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