



Department of Justice

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CITIZEN OF MEXICO SENTENCED FOR ROLE IN FEDERAL SEX TRAFFICKING CONSPIRACY

ATLANTA, GA - MIGUEL RUGERIO, 28, a Mexican national, was sentenced to federal prison today by United States District Judge Clarence Cooper on charges of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and related immigration offenses, and of transporting one of the victims of the conspiracy, a young Mexican woman identified as "N.M.," in interstate and foreign commerce for purposes of prostitution.

Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of today's sentencing, "This defendant lured young women from Mexico with the promise of money and legitimate jobs and then forced them into prostitution and repulsive living conditions. He is now going to federal prison for five years and then will be expelled from the United States."

In Washington, D.C., Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, said, "This defendant deprived vulnerable victims of their freedom, their dignity and their civil rights. Today's sentencing should send a clear message to would-be perpetrators that human trafficking will not be tolerated in the United States."

"Few crimes are more repugnant than sex trafficking helpless and innocent victims," said Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs (ICE) Enforcement Office of Investigations in Atlanta. "This sentencing is gratifying given the horrible conditions the victims in this case were forced to endure. While we can't erase the suffering these women experienced, by aggressively investigating and prosecuting these cases, ICE and its law enforcement partners are sending a powerful warning about the consequences facing those responsible for such schemes."

FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge Greg Jones said, "Today's sentencing of Mr. Rugerio provides further opportunities for law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, as well as the many and varied victim assistance based agencies, to highlight the growing crime problem known as human trafficking. Mr. Rugerio will now have five years in federal prison to consider the exploitation and victimization of those that he brought in to the U.S. under false pretenses for purposes of prostitution."

RUGERIO was sentenced to five years in federal prison. There is no parole in the federal system. At the conclusion of his sentence, he is expected to be removed from the United States. He pleaded guilty to the charges on October 28, 2009.

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the indictment, and information presented in court: RUGERIO admitted in his plea that from July 2006 to August 2008, he conspired with others to use force, fraud and coercion to cause approximately five female victims to come to the Atlanta area from Mexico and to engage in prostitution for the financial benefit of the members of the alleged conspiracy. RUGERIO further admitted to transporting a victim to states outside of Georgia, including Alabama and Florida to engage her in prostitution. RUGERIO used false promises of better lives and marriage to lure young, impoverished Mexican women to come to the United States, knowing that he would cause the victims to engage in prostitution upon their arrival. RUGERIO required his victims to engage in commercial sex with many men per night, seven days a week.

This case resulted from a joint investigation conducted by ICE and the FBI.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie, Jr., and Trial Attorney Karima Maloney of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

For further information please contact Sally Quillian Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.