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BROTHERS CONVICTED IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING SCHEME

PHILADELPHIA - Omelyan Botsvynyuk, 52, and Stepan Botsvynyuk, 36, were convicted today of conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) in connection with a human trafficking scheme, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. Omelyan was also convicted of one count of extortion. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled.

From the Fall of 2000 through the Spring of 2007, the brothers conspired to engage in a pattern of racketeering activity by operating a human trafficking organization which smuggled young Ukrainian immigrants into the United States and then forced them to work for the brothers with little or no pay. The two defendants were indicted with three other brothers: Mykhaylo, Dmytro are awaiting extradition from Canada; Yaroslav Botsvynyuk is currently a fugitive.

The defendants promised the victims they would earn \$500 per month with free room and board by working for the Botsvynyuk organization. The workers were smuggled into the United States, the brothers confiscated the immigration documents, and then put the victims to work on cleaning crews in retail stores, private homes, and office buildings without paying them. The brothers used physical force, threats of force, sexual assault, and debt bondage to keep the victims in involuntary servitude. The brothers also threatened violence to the workers' families who still residing in Ukraine. One female worker was brutally raped on several occasions.

The case was investigated by the Joint FBI Organized Crime/ICE Human Trafficking Alien Smuggling Task Force Federal. Assistance was provided by Pennsylvania State Police, the Philadelphia Police Department, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Toronto Police Department, German National Police, Berlin State Police, Ukraine Security Service, US National Central Bureau, the Department of Justice Office of International Affairs, and INTERPOL. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Daniel A. Velez and Randy Hsia.

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