

Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 27, 2012
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FEDERAL AUTHORITIES CRACK DOWN ON THE ILLEGAL SALE OF IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

BUFFALO, N.Y. - U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Xavier Gonzalez, 26, Mario Soto, 37, and Jorge Garcia, 36, were arrested today in unrelated cases and each charged with selling identification documents in violation of federal law. Gonzalez and Garcia were each charged in a criminal complaint with selling more than five sets of identification documents to a government informant. They face a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 or both. Soto is charged in a criminal complaint with selling a social security card which is punishable by a maximum sentence of five years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 or both.

Gonzalez and Soto were arrested locally. Garcia was arrested in the state of Texas and will be returned to the Western District of New York to answer these charges.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell T. Ippolito, Jr., who is handling the case, stated that each of the three defendants sold identification documents on separate occasions to a confidential informant working with federal law enforcement officers.

Gonzalez and Soto made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeremiah J. McCarthy this afternoon and were released on bond.

The criminal complaints are the result of an investigation by Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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