

June 17, 2004

Fact Sheet

ICE Border Security & Immigration Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). ICE unites the functions, resources, and legal authorities of several previously fragmented border and security organizations into an integrated homeland security agency focused on investigations and enforcement. ICE's mission is to prevent terrorist and criminal acts by targeting the people, money, and materials that support terrorist and criminal networks.

Immigration enforcement is one of ICE's primary missions and a vital component of homeland security. Recognizing that terrorists and criminals have exploited vulnerabilities in our border security to enter and remain in the United States, ICE has developed a comprehensive and aggressive strategy to restore integrity to the nation's immigration system.

TARGETING IMMIGRATION VIOLATORS AND FUGITIVES

ICE aims to detect and combat methods of **immigration fraud** by which terrorist and criminal networks gain entry to the United States. Phony documentation, false or stolen IDs, student visa fraud, or false claims of political asylum are examples of how terrorist, criminals, and other illegal immigrants exploit vulnerabilities in the immigration system. ICE is dedicated to investigating and shutting down those vulnerabilities.

ICE's **Forensic Documents Laboratory (FDL)** serves as a critical investigative tool in fighting immigration fraud. The FDL is the only federal crime laboratory dedicated almost entirely to the forensic examination of documents. The lab offers a full range of services to ICE and other law enforcement agencies, including handwriting analysis, foreign and domestic document examinations, fingerprint analysis, and training in the detection of fraudulent documents. The FDL is staffed 365 days a year to provide timely responses to law enforcement inquiries.

ICE's **Office of Detention and Removal (DRO)** apprehends and deports individuals who are in the United States illegally. A top priority for DRO is to deport foreign nationals who have been convicted of serious or violent crimes. To that end, DRO maintains a "Most Wanted" list of the most dangerous criminal aliens. DRO has also launched several initiatives to ensure that illegal immigrants are swiftly and efficiently removed, including a program focused on capturing fugitives who have evaded deportation. In addition, DRO is exploring programs to serve as humane and effective alternatives to detention, including an electronic monitoring program for selected aliens awaiting immigration court appearances.

ICE's **Compliance Enforcement Unit (CEU)** tracks and pursues immigration violators by examining data from key national databases: the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)**, the **National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS)**, and the **U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status and Indicator Technology (US-VISIT)**. The CEU analyzes these registration systems for immigration violations, referring leads on violators to ICE investigators. To date, investigations arising from these leads have resulted in hundreds of arrests of individuals with terrorist associations, narcotic and weapons violations, and records of murder, rape, and child sex crimes.

TARGETING HUMAN TRAFFICKERS AND SMUGGLERS

ICE's Office of Investigations includes a unit dedicated to combating human smuggling and trafficking. This unit targets the criminal organizations and individuals who engage in these practices, disrupting their operations through investigations, asset seizures, and prosecutions.

In parts of the nation, smuggling and trafficking organizations have become increasingly violent, posing a serious threat to public safety. **Operation ICE Storm** is ICE's initiative to identify and dismantle criminal smuggling networks in Phoenix, Arizona. Under this initiative, ICE works in partnership with other agencies in the U.S. and Mexico to seize assets and prosecute smugglers. With the agency's investigative and enforcement resources, ICE can attack smugglers from an immigration angle, from a financial angle, and from a contraband/weapons/drug smuggling angle – all at the same time. In its first few months, "ICE Storm" netted 3,300 arrests for a wide range of offenses and 570 alien hostage rescues, while seizing scores of weapons and over \$2 million in currency. "ICE Storm" is a model for future coordinated law enforcement efforts to battle smuggling and illegal immigration on a larger scale.

PARTNERING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

ICE works closely with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to share information and target immigration violators and fugitives. Under **Section 287(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1996**, state and local law enforcement agencies can request the authority to enforce immigration law in their jurisdictions. ICE provides specialized training in immigration issues (focusing on immigration law, civil rights, intercultural relations, anti-racial profiling, and other issues), along with supervision, for state and local officers engaged in immigration enforcement.

ICE's **Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC)** provides local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies with timely information on immigration status and identity. The LESL operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to coordinate information gathered from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the Interstate Identification Index, and numerous other databases and criminal history indexes. The LESL serves as a national enforcement operations center, providing timely information on immigration status on foreign-born individuals who are under investigation or in custody. The LESL also offers a range of informational and analytical services to multi-agency investigations.

ICE's **Institutional Removal Program (IRP)** targets criminal aliens who are serving sentences in federal and state prisons, ensuring that, upon their release, these aliens are taken directly into ICE custody for deportation from the United States – before they can be released into the community.

PROTECTING VICTIMS

ICE also works to counter identity theft as it relates to immigration fraud. Terrorist and criminal networks can employ stolen identification and other documents to construct a false identity, easing their entry into the United States. ICE investigators, with the support of the Forensic Document Laboratory, work to uncover identity theft in immigration cases before significant damage is done to the victims.

ICE's **Operation Predator** is a comprehensive enforcement initiative designed to protect young people from international human traffickers, sex tourists, child pornographers, and other predatory criminals. Under Operation Predator, ICE is taking several new steps to identify, investigate, and remove child predators from America's streets. Many of those arrested are in the United States illegally, and many have records of serious criminal behavior in their home countries. To date, ICE has arrested more than 2,600 sexual predators.

ICE's "**No Safe Haven**" initiative targets human rights violators with records of genocide, war crimes, torture, and religious persecution who may be living in the United States. Under "No Safe Haven," ICE works with victims, witnesses, non-governmental organizations, and other law enforcement agencies worldwide to coordinate investigations and identify human rights violators. ICE ensures that human rights violators are brought to justice, prosecuted, and deported.

In addition, ICE works with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) "**Rescue and Restore**" campaign to ensure that **victims of human trafficking** receive the services and support they need.

SECURING WORKSITES

ICE focuses primarily on worksite enforcement investigations involving national security sites, human smuggling, human rights abuses, and other criminal violations. In addition, ICE conducts administrative investigations of employers who may be violating the law. ICE also helps employers to **protect themselves** against hiring illegal immigrants, by offering education, outreach, and training programs to ensure that employers recognize ways in which they may be vulnerable.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for the enforcement of border, economic, infrastructure and transportation security laws. ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.

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