



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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FIVE CHARGED WITH HOSTAGE TAKING AND BRANDISHING FIREARMS DURING A CRIME OF VIOLENCE

PHOENIX - A federal grand jury in Phoenix returned a 13-count indictment yesterday against Rigoberto Aramburo-Lizzaraga, 25; Juan Andres Ramirez-Aguirre, 34; Franki Alfonso Garcia-Sustaita 31; and Santiago Casteneda-Aramburo, 18, all of Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico; and Roberto Lopez-Hernandez, 23, of Durango, Durango, Mexico for the following criminal offenses: 1 count of Conspiracy to Commit Hostage Taking; 5 counts of Hostage Taking; 5 counts of Use, Carrying and Brandishing of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence (Hostage Taking); 1 count of Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain; and 1 count of Harboring Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain. The defendants are currently in custody and will be arraigned on the charges on April 9, 2008. At arraignment a trial date will be set before U.S. District Court Judge James A. Teilborg.

The indictment alleges that from about March 3 through March 10, 2008 the above named defendants held five illegal aliens hostage in a house in Avondale, Ariz. in order to compel others to pay money to secure the hostages' release. The indictment further alleges that while detaining those five aliens, the defendants used, carried, and brandished firearms. Finally, the indictment alleges that the defendants conspired to harbor, and did harbor, the five aliens for the purpose of private financial gain.

A conviction for Hostage Taking or Conspiracy to Commit Hostage Taking carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. A conviction for Using and Carrying a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence in which the gun was brandished carries a mandatory minimum penalty of seven years in prison for the first count and 25 years in prison for each subsequent count, with a maximum penalty of life in prison. A conviction for Harboring Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. Furthermore, any sentence for a conviction for Using, Carrying or Brandishing a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence must run consecutively to any other sentence of imprisonment, including any other sentence imposed in the same case. Each of the counts also carries a potential maximum fine of \$250,000 which can be imposed in the alternative or in addition to the potential prison sentence. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Teilborg will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Avondale Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Tracey A. Bardorf and Josh Patrick Parecki , Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-0263-PHX
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-083(Aramburo-Lizzaraga, et.al)

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