



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

ALIEN SMUGGLER PLEADS GUILTY TO HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS FOR FINANCIAL GAIN

PHOENIX - Angel Mendoza-Romero, 40, of Mexico, pleaded guilty yesterday to Harboring Illegal Aliens For Financial Gain before U.S. Magistrate Judge Lawrence O. Anderson. Sentencing is set before U.S. District Judge James A. Teilborg on May 4, 2009.

In the days leading up to December 30, 2008, Mendoza-Romero operated an alien smuggling business from a private residence in Phoenix where he held at least two illegal aliens hostage, threatened them with violence and physical injury if their families did not pay a ransom, assaulted them by striking and kicking them and also brandished and menaced them with a firearm.

A conviction for Harboring Illegal Aliens For Financial Gain carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. 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.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution is being handled by Walter Perkel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-09-88-PHX-JAT
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-054(Mendoza-Romero)

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