



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

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Contact: Dani Bennett  
(202) 732-6121

## **ICE's 'Operation Raging Bull' nets 267 MS-13 arrests**

*53 arrested in El Salvador, 214 arrested across the US*

WASHINGTON — U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) officials today announced the results of stepped up efforts by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the departments to target and dismantle MS-13 – culminating in the arrest of 267 in the U.S. and overseas.

“Operation Raging Bull” was led by ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) with support from federal, state, local and international law enforcement partners, and was conducted in support of the Department of Justice’s renewed [prioritization](#) of the violent transnational gang.

“MS-13 has long been a priority for ICE. However we are now combating the gang with renewed focus and an unprecedented level of cooperation among DHS’s components and our domestic and international partners,” said Thomas Homan, ICE Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director. “ICE has the ability to pursue complex criminal cases using our statutory authorities and to prevent crime by using our administrative arrest authorities to remove gang members from the country. We will not rest until every member, associate, and leader of MS-13 has been held accountable for their crimes, and those in this country illegally have been removed.”

The operation was conducted in two phases, targeting dangerous gang members and their global financial networks. In September, ICE [announced](#) the results of the first phase of this operation which netted 53 arrests in El Salvador at the conclusion of an 18-month investigation. The second phase was conducted across the U.S. from Oct. 8 to Nov. 11, and concluded with 214 MS-13 arrests nationwide.

HSI received significant operational support, including intelligence sharing and collaboration, from ICE’s Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the U.S. Department of Treasury, DOJ’s Bureau of Prisons (BOP) as well as state, local, federal, and international law enforcement partners. The Organized Crime and Gang Section of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, with funding from the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces, along with the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in the Districts of Arizona, Maryland, Massachusetts, Northern District of California, Southern District of Iowa and Southern District of Texas, and are prosecuting the cases.

“With more than 10,000 members across 40 states, MS-13 is one of the most dangerous criminal organizations in the United States today,” said Attorney General Jeff Sessions. “President Trump has ordered the Department of Justice to reduce crime and take down transnational criminal organizations, and we will be relentless in our pursuit of these objectives. That’s why I have ordered our drug trafficking task forces to use every law available to arrest, prosecute, convict, and defund MS-13. And we are getting results. So far this year, we have secured convictions against more

than 1,200 gang members and worked with our partners in Central America to arrest and charge some 4,000 MS-13 members. I want to thank the Department of Homeland Security, our federal law enforcement agents and prosecutors from the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Gang Section as well as Treasury, BOP, DOJ's OCDETF task force members, and all of our state and local law enforcement partners for their hard work. These 267 arrests are the next step toward making this country safer by taking MS-13 off of our streets for good."

"Securing the homeland is a critical piece of the USCIS mission," said USCIS Director L. Francis Cissna. "We are committed to supporting and providing intelligence to our law enforcement colleagues on public safety initiatives like Operation Raging Bull. We will bring all of our agency's resources to bear in helping protect the American public from violent crime, and in the pursuit of those who seek to endanger the security of our nation."

"This joint effort is not new. It is something we all do as law enforcement," said Border Patrol Deputy Chief Scott Luck. "I look forward to continue working with my partners here at Headquarters as well as the field to address not just this threat but all threats."

"The Bureau of Prisons is proud to have supported our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners in this successful effort to enhance public safety," said Frank Lara, Assistant Director for Correctional Programs with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. "The Bureau will continue to work collaboratively to combat the threat violent gangs pose inside prisons and in the community."

Of the total 214 arrests made in the U.S., 93 were arrested on federal and/or state criminal charges including murder, aggravated robbery, racketeering influenced corrupt organization (RICO) offenses, violent crime in aid of racketeering (VICAR) offenses, narcotics trafficking, narcotics possession, firearms offenses, domestic violence, assault, forgery, driving under the influence, and illegal entry/reentry. The remaining 121 were arrested on administrative immigration violations.

Sixteen of the 214 arrested were U.S. citizens and 198 were foreign nationals, of which only five had legal status to be in the U.S. Foreign nationals arrested were from El Salvador (135), Honduras (29), Mexico (17), Guatemala (12), Ecuador (4) and Costa Rica (1).

Sixty-four individuals had illegally crossed the border as unaccompanied alien children; most are now adults.

Examples of domestic arrests made during this operation include:

- In Baltimore, Maryland, the arrest and [indictment](#) of four MS-13 members on charges that include violent crimes in aid of racketeering and conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering.
- In McKinney, Texas, the arrest of an MS-13 gang member and citizen of El Salvador who is wanted for homicide by the National Civil Police of El Salvador (PNC).
- In Denver, Colorado, the arrest of an MS-13 gang member and citizen of El Salvador who is wanted on an outstanding warrant for DUI and was found with three machetes in his possession.
- In Los Angeles, California, the arrest of an MS-13 member and citizen of El Salvador, [subject of an INTERPOL Red Notice](#) for gang offenses and involvement with the murder of an PNC officer in El Salvador.

- In San Francisco, California, the arrest of an MS-13 member and citizen of El Salvador, who is a wanted fugitive in El Salvador on an arrest warrant for violent crimes including homicide.

Following this operation, ICE has added six MS-13 fugitives to its list of “most wanted” individuals, including one fugitive wanted for homicide in Montgomery County, Texas, and five others wanted for their involvement in the homicide and attempted homicides of El Salvadoran police officers. All are suspected of being somewhere in the U.S.

Operation Raging Bull is the latest example of ICE’s ongoing efforts, begun in 2005 under [Operation Community Shield](#), to target violent gang members and their associates, eradicate the violence they inflict upon our communities and stop the cash flow to transnational organized crime groups. Since 2005, HSI special agents working in conjunction with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies have made more than 61,000 gang-related arrests; more than 8,100 of those being members or associates of MS-13.

In October 2012, HSI worked with the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control to designate MS-13 as the first transnational criminal street gang as a transnational criminal organization. As a result of the designation, any property or property interests in the U.S., or in the possession or control of U.S. persons in which MS-13 has an interest, are blocked.

Individuals are confirmed as gang members if they admit membership in a gang; have been convicted of violating Title 18 USC 521 or any other federal or state law criminalizing or imposing civil consequences for gang-related activity; or if they meet certain other criteria such as having tattoos identifying a specific gang or being identified as a gang member by a reliable source.

Gang associates are individuals who exhibit gang member criteria but who are not formally initiated into the gang. Law enforcement officers encountering these individuals will determine whether indications of gang association are present by referring to the gang membership criteria.

HSI’s National Gang Unit oversees HSI’s expansive transnational gang portfolio and enables special agents to bring the fight to these criminal enterprises through the development of uniform enforcement and intelligence-sharing strategies.

To report suspicious activity, call ICE's 24-hour toll-free hotline at: 1-866-DHS-2-ICE or visit [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov). All tips can be provided anonymously.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit: [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.*