

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Karen P. Hewitt***

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***For Immediate Release***

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** - April 2, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Carmen Alvarado and Sandra Munoz were both sentenced today in U.S. District Court in San Diego by the Honorable Larry A. Burns. Judge Burns sentenced Alvarado to serve 30 months in custody, followed by three years of supervised release, based on her guilty pleas on August 31, 2006, to charges of Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain and Filing a False Tax Return. Codefendant Munoz was sentenced to serve 21 months in custody, followed by three years of supervised release for her role in Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain and Filing a False Tax Return.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda Frakes, who prosecuted the case, Alvarado was a leader of an alien smuggling organization who hired drivers to bring illegal aliens into the United States through Customs and Border Protection Officer Richard Elizalda's primary inspection lane at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. As part of the smuggling scheme, Elizalda communicated his lane assignment information via text messaging to Alvarado. Alvarado enlisted her daughter, codefendant Munoz, to drive the illegal aliens through Elizalda's lane. Elizalda was paid a cash bribe for allowing the aliens to enter illegally. During the

course of the conspiracy, which lasted approximately two years, Alvarado and Munoz brought in more than 100 illegal aliens. In connection with her guilty plea, Alvarado admitted she filed a false tax return and acknowledged she still owes the Government \$13,510. Munoz also admitted she filed a false tax return; she owes the Government \$8,979. During the investigation, agents with the Border Corruption Task Force and Immigration and Customs Enforcement identified Alvarado and codefendant Raquel Arin as leaders of the alien smuggling organization working with Elizalda. Elizalda accepted more than \$70,000 in bribes for allowing hundreds of illegal aliens to enter the United States. Elizalda was sentenced on March 26, 2007 to serve 57 months in custody; Arin was sentenced on February 15, 2007, to serve 30 months in custody.

In imposing the sentence, Judge Burns noted that Alvarado was the leader of an extensive organization bringing in hundreds of illegal aliens and that she knowingly filed her tax return falsely.

U.S. Attorney Hewitt said, "Today's sentence demonstrates that those who engage in alien smuggling activity and cheat on their taxes face severe sentences for their criminal activity."

"Federal and local law enforcement agencies stand committed to eradicating border corruption. We cannot tolerate those individuals who choose to place our country's security in harm's way for their personal financial benefit. The public can be confident that the integrity of our tax system is our highest priority," said Kenneth J. Hines, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, San Diego Field Office.

This case was the result of a two-year investigation entitled, "Operation Permanent Wave," involving agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Internal Revenue Service, and Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General.

**DEFENDANTS**

**Case No. 06cr1195-LAB**

Carmen Alvarado

Sentence: 30 months; 3 years supervised release; no fine, \$200 penalty assessment.

Sandra Munoz

Sentence: 21 months, 3 years of supervised release; no fine, \$200 penalty assessment.

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count: 2

Charges: Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain  
Title 18, United States Code, Section 371 and Title 8, United States Code,  
Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)

Counts: 3

Charges: Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain  
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)

Counts: 14 and 15

Charges: Filing a False Tax Return  
Title 26, United States Code, Section 7201(1)

### **PARTICIPATING AGENCIES**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation

United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement

United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General

United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of  
Professional Responsibility

United States Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism Contraband  
Enforcement Team

San Diego County Sheriff