



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ANOTHER CHILD SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO 15 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON

TUCSON, Ariz. – Maria de Jesus Perez-Portillo, 24, of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced yesterday to 15 months in prison by U.S. District Court Judge Raner Collins. Perez-Portillo pleaded guilty on July 7, 2008, to Conspiracy to Transport an Illegal Alien for Profit after she attempted to smuggle a 7-year-old girl into the United States.

Perez-Portillo attempted to enter the U.S. on February 20, 2008, at the Nogales, Ariz. Port of Entry with a 7-year-old girl. Perez-Portillo presented a laser visa for the child, which belonged to someone else. She told the U.S. Customs and Border Protection official that she had picked up the child at a park in downtown Nogales, Sonora, from a woman. She was to take the child to the Food City store in Nogales, Ariz., and deliver her to an unknown man. Perez-Portillo was paid \$200 from the woman in Mexico. She stated that she did not know the child.

The smuggled child was turned over to the custody of the Mexican Consulate who then turned her over to the Mexican Department of Family Services (the Mexican equivalent of U.S. Child Protective Services) to be reunited with her family.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The prosecution was handled by Raquel Arellano, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-0328-TUC-RCC
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-248(Perez-Portillo)

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