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## **Mississippi Raid Largest in U.S. History; ICE Arrests Hundreds in Other Raids**

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents took nearly 600 plant workers into custody on August 5, 2008, in what is reportedly the largest immigration raid in U.S. history. The raid at the Howard Industries transformer plant was the result of an investigation prompted by a tip from a union member. The workers were from Brazil, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Peru, ICE said. The agency also arrested 400 workers on May 12 at the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant in Iowa, and seized a number of fraudulent green cards from the company's human resources department.

Meanwhile, ICE arrested 42 undocumented men at Washington Dulles International Airport as part of a critical infrastructure protection (CIP) operation. ICE agents, with support of airport security agencies, arrested the men just inside the airport grounds at a checkpoint established to verify the identity and immigration status of workers entering a service gate.

ICE agents interviewed more than 200 individuals to verify their identities, immigration status, and eligibility for lawful employment in the U.S. Among those arrested were nationals of Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru. Most of the individuals encountered worked on construction projects at the airport. Those detained are being interviewed, fingerprinted, photographed, and entered into Department of Homeland Security databases at a local ICE office.

In another action, 57 undocumented workers at Mills Manufacturing Corporation (MMC) in Asheville, North Carolina, were arrested by ICE special agents. MMC is a Department of Defense contractor responsible for the manufacturing of parachutes for the U.S. military. Among those arrested were nationals of Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Honduras.

The arrests were based on an ICE investigation that revealed, ICE said, that the workers had used fraudulent social security numbers to obtain employment. The agency said the company has been fully cooperative and is not a target of the ICE investigation.

All of those arrested were transferred to the Henderson County Sheriff's Office for immigration processing, and all were placed into removal proceedings for being in violation of U.S. immigration law. Those arrested were interviewed by ICE agents to determine if they had medical, caregiver, or other humanitarian issues. ICE identified approximately 29 individuals who qualified for humanitarian release and will be required to appear before a federal immigration judge.

In fiscal year 2008, ICE agents have made more than 700 administrative arrests and 100 criminal arrests at critical infrastructure facilities. As of July 2008, ICE has made more than 3,800 administrative arrests overall for immigration violations during worksite enforcement operations.

The Mississippi announcement is available at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/nr/0808/080826laurel.htm>. The Dulles announcement is available at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/nr/0808/080813washington.htm>. The MMC announcement is available at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/nr/0808/080812asheville.htm>.