

**Dear Colleagues:**

**Below please find press releases announcing recent developments in the fight against human trafficking. Since our last update in early October, we have convicted and sentenced defendants in both labor trafficking and sex trafficking cases; indicted new labor trafficking and sex trafficking cases, and secured appellate opinions affirming fifty-year sentences of three defendants in two separate sex trafficking cases.**

**On February 2, 2010, a jury in Fort Worth, Texas convicted two defendants of forced labor, document servitude, conspiracy, and other offenses for holding a Nigerian victim in domestic service for over eight years. The defendants lured the victim, an impoverished, widowed mother of six, on false promises that the victim's children would be provided for in exchange for her service. The defendants then confiscated the victim's identification documents, withheld her pay, monitored and restricted her communications, subjected her to sexual assaults, and compelled her to work long hours, seven days a week, refusing her requests to return home or be paid.**

**On February 3, 2010, defendant Miguel Angel Rugerio was sentenced in federal district court in Atlanta, Georgia, to sixty months in prison for his role in a sex trafficking conspiracy. He pled guilty to the offense on October 29, 2009. The defendant and his co-conspirators were charged in United States v. Rugerio with engaging in a scheme to lure young, vulnerable victims from Mexico on promises of a better life, and then to use threats, assaults, and psychological coercion to compel the victims into prostitution for the defendants' profit.**

**Last week, on January 28, 2010, a defendant was sentenced in United States v. Cooney in the Eastern District of Arkansas to 90 months' imprisonment pursuant to his guilty plea on one count of sex trafficking. His co-defendant, who pled guilty on October 23, 2009, in connection with the sex trafficking scheme that targeted U.S. citizen victims, is awaiting sentencing.**

**Also last week, on January 25, 2010, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in United States v. Mendez affirmed the 50-year sentence of a sex trafficker who was charged in the Western District of Tennessee in a**

scheme to lure young women and girls from Mexico on false promises of legitimate jobs, and then force them into prostitution, abusing them both physically and sexually and confiscating all their earnings. The affirmance in Mendez came shortly after another co-defendant in that case, Cristina Andres Perfecto, was sentenced on December 24, 2009 to 190 months for her role in the sex trafficking operation. A total of eleven defendants were convicted in connection with the case.

On January 13, 2010, in United States v. Sou, two defendants entered guilty pleas in the district of Hawaii to charges of forced labor conspiracy, arising from their conspiracy to compel 44 Thai agricultural workers into service at the defendants' family farm, using a scheme of debts, restraint, and threats of serious harm to intimidate the workers and place them in fear of attempting to leave.

At the conclusion of a three-day sex trafficking trial, a San Diego, California jury returned convictions on January 8, 2010, on ten counts, including two counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion, for luring young Mexican victims into the United States and compelling them into prostitution through intimidation, fear, and psychological coercion. The defendant in that case, United States v. Zitlalpopoca-Hernandez, is scheduled to be sentenced in April.

On December 17, 2009, a federal grand jury in Anchorage, Alaska indicted four co-defendants in United States v. Mujahid, on sex trafficking and related charges arising from a criminal enterprise that compelled U.S. citizen victims, both adults and minors, into prostitution, using threats, physical assaults, and sexual assaults to control the victims if they disobeyed or attempted to leave, and requiring the victims to turn over the proceeds to the defendants.

In an indictment unsealed on December 9, 2009, a federal grand jury in Atlanta, Georgia indicted two defendants in United States v. Babb on charges of recruiting the victim from the Kingdom of Swaziland on false promises of a lucrative, short-term catering job, then using a scheme of threats of arrest, confiscation of identification documents, and withholding of pay to compel the victim into continued service in the defendants' home and business.

**On November 17, 2009, defendant Consuelo Carreto Valencia was sentenced to 121 months in prison for her role in the Carreto family sex trafficking ring that compelled young Mexican women and girls into prostitution in New York, for the profit of the defendants, using threats, physical assaults, psychological manipulation, and control over the victims' children to hold the victims in fear and under the defendants' control. The two lead defendants in the case, Carreto Valencia's sons, had each been sentenced to fifty years' imprisonment, preceding Carreto Valencia's extradition from Mexico. On October 28, 2009, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lead defendants' convictions and fifty-year sentences.**

**Previously, on October 22, 2009, a defendant was convicted in the District of New Jersey on all twenty-two counts, following a four-week trial, for holding young West African victims, including minor girls as young as ten years old, in forced labor in hair-braiding salons in Newark and East Orange, New Jersey. The defendant and her associates, who had previously pled guilty in connection with the scheme, used threats, violence, confiscation of the victims' identification documents, isolation, restricted communications, and psychological manipulation--including voodoo curses--to intimidate and control the young victims, compelling them to work long hours, seven days a week, and turn over the proceeds to the defendants. The defendant in that case, United States v. Afolabi, is awaiting sentencing.**

**And the prior week, on October 19, 2009, a defendant was sentenced in United States v. Pelayo, in the Central District of California, to 57 months in prison following her conviction for luring Filipino victims into the United States to work in the defendant's elder care facilities, then compelling their continued service by confiscating their passports, isolating them, working them around the clock for meager pay, demanding repayment of smuggling debts, and threatening to report them to authorities if they attempted to escape. The defendant was also ordered to pay the victims over \$167,000 in restitution.**

**These cases vary in so many ways: they traverse the United States from Alaska to Arkansas, and New York to Hawaii; they target an array of**

**vulnerable victims, male and female, adult and minor, from Africa, Southeast Asia, Mexico, and the United States; and they arise in diverse contexts, ranging from farm fields to hair-braiding salons, and from suburban homes and elder-care facilities to prostitution rings. Yet, underneath their differences, these cases are strikingly similar, each involving exploitation, coercion, and control of another human being, and each therefore requiring decisive condemnation in a society founded on individual rights to freedom.**

**Each of these developments is the result of sustained, collaborative efforts on the part of multiple law enforcement agencies and victim service providers. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with all of our colleagues in our ongoing efforts to combat human trafficking.**

**Hilary Axam  
Acting Director  
Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit  
Criminal Section, Civil Rights Division**

**CITIZEN OF MEXICO SENTENCED FOR ROLE IN  
FEDERAL SEX TRAFFICKING CONSPIRACY**

ATLANTA, GA--MIGUEL RUGERIO, 28, a Mexican national, was sentenced to federal prison today by United States District Judge Clarence Cooper on charges of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and related immigration offenses, and of transporting one of the victims of the conspiracy, a young Mexican woman identified as "N.M.," in interstate and foreign commerce for purposes of prostitution.

Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of today's sentencing, "This defendant lured young women from Mexico with the promise of money and legitimate jobs and then forced them into prostitution and repulsive living conditions. He is now going to federal prison for five years and then will be expelled from the United States."

In Washington, D.C., Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, said, "This defendant deprived vulnerable victims of their freedom, their dignity and their civil rights. Today's sentencing should send a clear message to

would-be perpetrators that human trafficking will not be tolerated in the United States.”

“Few crimes are more repugnant than sex trafficking helpless and innocent victims,” said Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs (ICE) Enforcement Office of Investigations in Atlanta. “This sentencing is gratifying given the horrible conditions the victims in this case were forced to endure. While we can't erase the suffering these women experienced, by aggressively investigating and prosecuting these cases, ICE and its law enforcement partners are sending a powerful warning about the consequences facing those responsible for such schemes.”

FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge Greg Jones said, “Today's sentencing of Mr. Rugerio provides further opportunities for law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, as well as the many and varied victim assistance based agencies, to highlight the growing crime problem known as human trafficking. Mr. Rugerio will now have five years in federal prison to consider the exploitation and victimization of those that he brought in to the U.S. under false pretenses for purposes of prostitution.”

RUGERIO was sentenced to five years in federal prison. There is no parole in the federal system. At the conclusion of his sentence, he is expected to be removed from the United States. He pleaded guilty to the charges on October 28, 2009.

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the indictment, and information presented in court: RUGERIO admitted in his plea that from July 2006 to August 2008, he conspired with others to use force, fraud and coercion to cause approximately five female victims to come to the Atlanta area from Mexico and to engage in prostitution for the financial benefit of the members of the alleged conspiracy. RUGERIO further admitted to transporting a victim to states outside of Georgia, including Alabama and Florida to engage her in prostitution. RUGERIO used false promises of better lives and marriage to lure young, impoverished Mexican women to come to the United States, knowing that he would cause the victims to engage in prostitution upon their arrival. RUGERIO required his victims to engage in commercial sex with many men per night, seven days a week.

This case resulted from a joint investigation conducted by ICE and the FBI.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie, Jr., and Trial Attorney Karima Maloney of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

For further information please contact Sally Quillian Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

**Arlington, Texas, Couple Convicted of Forced Labor and Other Crimes for Holding Nigerian Woman in Domestic Servitude**

WASHINGTON – A federal jury has convicted an Arlington, Texas, husband and wife, Emmanuel and Ngozi Nnaji, of engaging in a nine-year scheme to compel the labor of a Nigerian victim as their domestic servant, the Justice Department announced today. The jury found the defendants guilty of conspiracy, forced labor, document servitude, alien harboring and false statements. Ngozi and Emmanuel Nnaji each face a maximum sentence of up to 55 years in prison.

According to the evidence at trial, Emmanuel Nnaji and Ngozi Nnaji enticed a widowed Nigerian mother of six to come to the United States to be their domestic servant by falsely promising a salary and support for her children, who she was struggling to support.

" Holding other human beings in servitude against their will is a violation of human rights that will not be tolerated in our free society, " stated Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. " This prosecution demonstrates our commitment to combating human trafficking in all its forms, vindicating the rights of trafficking victims and bringing human traffickers to justice. "

James T. Jacks, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas, said, "We are pleased that this North Texas jury was able to return such a swift verdict, validating the hard work of the Civil Rights Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

FBI, Dallas Division Special Agent in Charge Robert Casey said, "The crimes proven in this case underscore the importance of enforcing the nation's Civil Rights laws, and the FBI is firmly committed to that enforcement. The FBI's pursuit of this investigation should send a clear message to those who would hold another human being in criminal servitude."

The defendants procured fraudulent immigration documents, confiscated the victim's documents, harbored her in their home, compelled her to work long hours with no days off for little or no pay, used a scheme to isolate her and restrict her communications, withheld her documents and pay, and refused her requests to return home or be paid. The defendants also failed to provide support for the victim's six children in Nigeria, limited and monitored contact with her family in Nigeria, isolated her from normal society in the United States, and refused to allow her to regularly attend church. According to the evidence at trial, Emmanuel Nnaji sexually assaulted the victim and made her fearful to call the police.

This case was investigated by the FBI and prosecuted by Trial Attorney Susan L. French and Michael J. Frank of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

10-118  
Civil Rights Division

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 14, 2010

**Two Brothers Plead Guilty in Conspiracy to Hold Thai Workers in Forced Labor in Hawaii**

WASHINGTON – Defendants Alec Sou and Mike Sou, co-owners of Aloun Farm, pleaded guilty on Jan.13, 2010, in federal district court in Honolulu, to conspiring to commit forced labor. The two defendants, who are brothers, each face up to five years in prison for their respective roles in a labor trafficking scheme that held Thai agricultural workers in service at Aloun Farm through a scheme of debts, threats and restraint.

During their respective plea hearings, the defendants acknowledged that they conspired with one another and with others to hold 44 Thai men in forced labor on a farm operated by the defendants, using a scheme of physical restraint and threats of serious harm to intimidate the workers and hold them in fear of attempting to leave the defendants' service.

"Holding other human beings in servitude against their will is a violation of individual rights that is intolerable in a free society," stated Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "This prosecution demonstrates our commitment to combating human trafficking in all its forms, vindicating the rights of trafficking victims, and bringing human traffickers to justice."

"Labor traffickers prey on vulnerable victims and their dreams of a better life. Those who conspire to hold workers in forced labor undermine this country's promise of liberty and opportunity," said Florence T. Nakakuni, U.S. Attorney for the District of Hawaii. "We will continue to hold accountable those who seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the freedom, rights and dignity of others."

In the past fiscal year, the Civil Rights Division, in partnership with U.S. Attorney's Offices, brought a record number of human trafficking cases, including the highest number of labor trafficking cases ever brought in a single year.

The government's case is being prosecuted by trial attorneys Susan French and Kevonne Small of the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division and its Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit and by Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Cushman.

This case was investigated by FBI Special Agents Gary Brown in Honolulu and Tricia Whitehill in Los Angeles, with support from ICE Special Agents Frank Kalepa and Daniel Kenney.

10-037  
Civil Rights Division

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

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

***For Further Information, Contact: Assistant U. S. Attorney Christopher P. Tenorio (619)  
557-7843 For Immediate Release***

**FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS DEFENDANT ON SEX TRAFFICKING**

**CHARGES NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY -January 8, 2010** United States Attorney Karen P.

Hewitt announced today that Adrian Zitlalpopoca-Hernandez was convicted yesterday after a jury trial before District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez. A federal jury returned verdicts Thursday afternoon, convicting Zitlalpopoca-Hernandez on ten counts which included two counts of Sex Trafficking by Force, Fraud of Coercion; two counts of Persuasion or Coercion to Travel to Engage in Prostitution; two counts of Harboring Aliens for Purposes of Prostitution; two counts of Bringing Illegal Aliens into the United States for Financial Gain; and two counts of harboring illegal aliens. The verdict follows a three-day trial. According to evidence presented at trial, two women held at residences in the Vista area for purposes of prostitution had been trafficked into the United States by



Zitlalpopoca and that force, fraud, or coercion was used to cause the women to engage in commercial sex acts. Zitlalpopoca was arrested on November 20,

2008, after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and San Diego County Sheriff's deputies conducted a joint investigation into an anonymous report of forced prostitution in the Vista.

United States Attorney Hewitt stated, "We are gratified that the jury accepted the difficult testimony of two trafficking victims and acknowledged the conduct of the defendant to force and coerce their prostitution activities. This result is a testament to the hard work by the ICE Human Trafficking Unit and our continuing cooperation with the Sheriff's Department. Our Office will continue to investigate and prosecute these criminal cases of human exploitation to the full extent of the law."

The defendant is scheduled to be sentenced on April 12, 2010, at 9:00 a.m., before District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez. Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher P. Tenorio prosecuted the case.

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 24, 2009

**Nashville, Tennessee, Woman Sentenced on Sex Trafficking Charges**

Cristina Andres Perfecto of Nashville, Tenn., was sentenced late yesterday in federal court in Memphis to 190 months in prison for sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion, sex trafficking of a juvenile and conspiracy.

Perfecto pleaded guilty on Aug . 28, 2007, to two counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion and sex trafficking of a juvenile in the Western District of Tennessee, as well as one count of conspiracy in the Middle District of Tennessee.

Perfecto's co-defendant, Juan Mendez, was sentenced to 50 years in prison on June 27, 2008, after pleading guilty to child sex trafficking and sex trafficking by force, fraud, and coercion. Perfecto and Mendez each admitted to fraudulently luring two young girls, including a 13 year-old, from rural Mexico to Tennessee with the intent of forcing them into prostitution. Both further admitted that Mendez, with Perfecto's assistance, physically, verbally, and sexually abused the victims in order to coerce them into prostitution.

Nine other defendants had earlier pleaded guilty in this same case for crimes including: child sex trafficking, conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens, conspiracy to commit money laundering, enticing an individual to travel in interstate commerce to commit prostitution, and violating the Mann Act.

"This defendant lured vulnerable victims to the United States under false pretenses and coerced them into sexual slavery, depriving them of their freedom, their dignity and their civil rights," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "We will continue to aggressively prosecute individuals who engage in coercive sexual exploitation."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Steve Parker for the Western District of Tennessee and Trial Attorney Jonathan Skrmetti from the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division prosecuted the case. The investigation was led by Memphis FBI Agent Tracey Harris and Memphis U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agent Greg Swearngin. They were assisted by ICE agents in Nashville, the Memphis Police Department, the Nashville Police Department and FBI and ICE agents from around the country who lent their expertise to the investigation. Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, the YWCA, and World Relief have assisted the victims and witnesses in this matter.

09-1382  
Civil Rights Division

**For Immediate Release**  
January 28, 2010

**United States Attorney's Office**  
**Eastern District of Arkansas**  
**Contact: (501) 340-2600**

### **Little Rock Man Sentenced to 7 ½ Years in Prison for Sex Trafficking and Related Charges**

LITTLE ROCK—United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, Jane W. Duke, and Thomas J. Browne, Special Agent in Charge of the Little Rock Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced today that Everett Cooney was sentenced by United States Chief Judge J. Leon Holmes to 90 months' imprisonment followed by five years of supervised release on a federal charge of sex trafficking an underage female.

At his plea hearing on July 10, 2009, Cooney admitted he knew an underage female with the initials of "DB" was between the ages of 14 and 18 when she was caused to engage in commercial sex acts and that Cooney benefitted from her engaging in the commercial sex acts. Pursuant to the plea agreement, the pending indictment was dismissed.

Cooney's co-defendant, Tommy Handy, plead guilty to a charge of sex trafficking on October 23, 2009. Pursuant to the plea agreement, the pending indictment was dismissed. Handy's plea exposes him to a minimum of 10 years' and up to life imprisonment. He is awaiting sentencing by the court. Handy remains in custody pending his sentencing.

The case is the result of a joint investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the Little Rock Police Department. The case was prosecuted

by former Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Volpe, Assistant U.S. Attorney John Ray White and Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Trial Attorney Jim Felte.

**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE Friday,  
December 18, 2009**

**FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS ANCHORAGE RESIDENTS FOR CHARGES  
RELATED TO CONSPIRACIES TO COMMIT SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN**

***41-Count Federal Indictment Charges Three Men and One Woman with Conspiracy to Commit  
Sex Trafficking of Children, Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Numerous Other Charges  
Related to the Conspiracy***

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Karen L. Loeffler announced that on December 17, 2009, Sabil Mumin Mujahid, Sidney Lamar Greene, Keyana "Koko" Marshall and Rand Hooks, all of Anchorage, Alaska, were indicted by a federal grand jury in Anchorage in a second superseding indictment. The indictment charges:

- two counts of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of children and by force, fraud and coercion;
- two counts of sex trafficking of children and by force, fraud and coercion; • one count of attempted sex trafficking of a child and by force, fraud and coercion;
- six counts of promoting prostitution of children;
- eight counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion;
- ten counts of promoting prostitution;
- two counts of attempted sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion;
- two counts of possession of child pornography; • one count of sexual exploitation of a child – production of child pornography; • one count of tampering with a victim; • one count of conspiracy to defraud the government–filing false tax returns; and,
- five counts of identity theft.

The 41-count superseding indictment names Mujahid, age 52, Greene, age 38, Marshall, age 21 and Hooks, age 50, as the defendants. Not all of the defendants are named in each count.

According to the indictment, all of the defendants are alleged to have conspired to engage in the promotion of human trafficking, sex trafficking of minors, and promotion of prostitution or receiving the proceeds of promotion of prostitution. Mujahid, Greene and Marshall are also named in individual counts of the indictment for trafficking specific victims. Greene is alleged to have produced pornographic images of a minor in 1998, and of possessing those images in 2009. He is also alleged to have attempted to traffic a minor under the age of 18 in 2008, and of using a facility

of interstate commerce (the Internet) to promote prostitution in 2008. The tampering charge relates to the victim of the child pornography

charges.

Assistant United States Attorney Daniel R. Cooper, Jr. and Trial Attorney Chantel L. Febus, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, who presented the case to the grand jury, indicated that each defendant faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Upon conviction, each defendant also faces a fine exceeding \$1million, registration as a sex offender and five years to life on supervised release. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed will be based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the prior criminal history, if any, of the defendants. Greene has been detained since his arrest on the initial indictment on May 21, 2009.

The Anchorage Police Department Vice Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service–Criminal Investigation conducted the investigation leading to the indictment in this case. They were assisted by agents and detectives from the Innocence Lost Task Force and the Alaska Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office with assistance from the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and the Criminal Section of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

Charges pertaining to minors in this case were brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006, by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood combines federal, state and local resources to better identify, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov).

Authorities are seeking information regarding the identification of other victims of these crimes and ask that anyone with information please contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Anchorage at 907-276-4441.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

**Georgia Couple Charged with Human Trafficking and Immigration Violations for Exploiting Woman from Swaziland**

A federal grand jury in Atlanta has indicted an Ellenwood, Ga., husband and wife, Juna Gwendolyn Babb, 54, and Michael J. Babb, 53, on charges of conspiracy, forced labor, document servitude, which is

confiscating someone's passport and visa, and harboring an alien for financial gain, the Justice Department announced.

The indictment was handed down last week by a federal grand jury in Atlanta and remained sealed until the defendants were arrested today. They are expected to make their initial appearances today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Linda T. Walker.

According to the indictment and information presented in court: between about March 2005, and continuing until on or about Feb. 7, 2007, Juna Gwendolyn Babb and Michael J. Babb allegedly conspired to compel the labor of the victim by enticing her to come to the United States from the Kingdom of Swaziland, Africa. The indictment alleges they falsely promised the victim a lucrative, short-term opportunity to provide catering services at the wedding of a family member of theirs. However, upon the victim's arrival to the United States, the couple allegedly compelled her labor as a housekeeper and nanny in their home through the use of debt and threats of arrest and imprisonment.

After the victim's arrival in the United States, the defendants confiscated her passport and return airline ticket, and told the victim that she owed them a debt for the costs of her travel to the United States. The Babbs allegedly then compelled the victim's labor by using the debt that they claimed the victim owed them, and by threatening her with arrest and imprisonment by immigration authorities once her tourist visa expired. The couple then allegedly required the victim to clean the homes of their friends and associates, and to assist with Michael Babb's construction business. The indictment also alleges that the defendants required the victim to work long hours every day of the week, for which the victim was grossly underpaid on those few occasions that the Babbs paid her at all for her labor and services.

An indictment is merely an allegation and defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the FBI and ICE. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Stephanie Gabay-Smith and Richard Moultrie Jr., and Trial Attorney Karima Maloney of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

09-1322  
Civil Rights Division

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 17, 2009

**Mexican Citizen Sentenced to 121 Months in Prison for Her Participation in an Organization That Forced Young Mexican Women into Sexual Slavery in New York**

WASHINGTON – Consuelo Carreto Valencia, a member of the Carreto family sex trafficking ring that operated between Mexico and Queens, N.Y., was sentenced to 121 months in prison for benefitting financially from her participation in the organization, which transported young Mexican women to the

United States and forced them into prostitution. The sentencing proceeding was held today before U.S. District Judge Frederic Block at the U.S. Courthouse in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The sentence was announced by Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice; Benton J. Campbell, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; and John Morton, Assistant Secretary, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security (ICE).

From 1991 through 2004, Carreto Valencia served as a manager in her family's sex trafficking operation based in Tenancingo, Tlaxcala, Mexico. She and her sons, Josue Flores Carreto and Gerardo Flores Carreto, and others, recruited young, uneducated women and girls from impoverished areas of Mexico and used or approved of a combination of deception, fraud, threats and physical violence – including rape and coerced abortion – to force them to prostitute themselves in brothels throughout the New York City metropolitan area, including Queens and Brooklyn. Carreto Valencia and her family made hundreds of thousands of dollars in prostitution profits, while the victims, who had been separated from their families in Mexico, received next to nothing.

At her guilty plea hearing on July 22, 2008, Carreto Valencia admitted that while living in Mexico, she received wire transfers of money from New York, fully aware that they were the proceeds of acts of prostitution performed by women who had been recruited and smuggled into the United States by her sons and others. She also admitted that she knew that the young women had been forced into prostitution in the United States.

"The victims in this case were robbed of their freedom, their dignity and their human rights. This case should send a clear message to those who abuse the rights of innocent individuals for their own profit that the federal government will be there to bring the perpetrators to justice," said Assistant Attorney General Perez.

"It is unconscionable in this day and age that there are persons who would hold other human beings in conditions of servitude and force them into lives of prostitution in order to line their own pockets," stated U.S. Attorney Campbell. "As this case demonstrates, sex traffickers operating from abroad should be on notice that they will find no refuge from reach of United States law enforcement." Mr. Campbell extended his grateful appreciation to the agencies and individuals in the United States and abroad who assisted in the investigation.

"Even as Carreto Valencia heads to prison, there are still criminals coercing and trafficking young women and children into prostitution," said ICE Assistant Secretary Morton. "This case attests to the commitment of ICE and its law enforcement partners to insure that there is no safe haven for those who seek to endanger and dehumanize innocent women and children."

Previously, in April 2006, Josue Flores Carreto, Gerardo Flores Carreto and co-defendant Daniel Perez Alonso were sentenced to terms of 50, 50 and 25 years in prison, respectively, following their guilty pleas in April 2005. Carreto Valencia was extradited to the United States from Mexico in January 2007 to face the charges against her.



The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Monica E. Ryan and Hilary Axam, Acting Director of the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit of the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.

The case was investigated by Special Agents from the ICE New York Office with assistance provided by ICE Special Agents from the New Jersey and Mexico City offices; the New York City Police Department; the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; officials at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City; and officials of the Mexican Prosecutor General of the Republic.

09-1245  
Civil Rights Division

## **ATLANTA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL SEX TRAFFICKING AND MANN ACT CHARGES**

ATLANTA, GA--MIGUEL RUGERIO, 28, a Mexican national, pleaded guilty today in federal district court in Atlanta to charges of conspiracy to illegally transport young women from Mexico into the United States, and to harbor them, all for purposes of prostitution, and to engage in the sex trafficking of these victims. RUGERIO also pleaded guilty to transporting the victim "N.M." in interstate and foreign commerce for purposes of prostitution.

Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of today's plea, "Human traffickers trick, lie and coerce young women into this country with the promise that they will have their freedom, and work a legitimate job. Instead it is just the opposite: these young women are in essence held captive with almost no way out, and the so-called job they are forced to do demeans them. We will continue to find these traffickers and put them in federal prison, where there is no parole."

In Washington, D.C., Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, said "The guilty plea of Mr. Rugerio vindicates the young women who fell prey to his scheme and were led into prostitution at his hands. We are committed to combating human trafficking and prosecuting those who sexually exploit vulnerable women for financial benefit."

"This case is a perfect example of the outstanding cooperation between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and our sister law enforcement agencies. Because of positive interagency cooperation, human trafficking and smuggling criminal organizations are discovering how difficult it is for them to hide their illegal activities from authorities," said Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in Atlanta. "We are dedicated to identifying and dismantling these types of illicit operations wherever and whenever we find them."

FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge Greg Jones said, "As a direct result of this

criminal investigation and recently passed human trafficking legislation in Mexico, Mexican law enforcement has, for the first time, been able to launch their own investigation in an effort to combat this crime problem. We would like to express our gratitude to the Mexican Consulate in Atlanta, Georgia for not only their assistance in this matter in general but specifically in assisting the victims that were being exploited by Mr. Rugerio.”

According to Yates, the plea agreement and indictment, and information presented in court: RUGERIO admitted in his plea that from July 2006 to August 2008, he conspired with others to use force, fraud and coercion to cause approximately five victims to come to the Atlanta area from Mexico and to ultimately engage them in prostitution for the financial benefit of the members of the alleged conspiracy. RUGERIO further admitted to transporting a victim to states outside of Georgia, including Alabama and Florida to engage her in prostitution. RUGERIO used false promises of better lives and a romantic relationship to lure young, impoverished Mexican women to come to the United States, knowing that he would cause the victims to engage in prostitution upon their arrival. RUGERIO required his victims to engage in commercial sex with many men per night, seven days a week. RUGERIO was indicted on the charges on August 12, 2008. RUGERIO faces a sentence of 5 years imprisonment. RUGERIO remains in custody pending his sentencing, which is scheduled for January 27, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. before Senior United States District Judge Clarence Cooper.

This case is the result of a joint investigation conducted by ICE and the FBI. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie, Jr., and Trial Attorney Karima Maloney of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

For further information please contact Sally Quillian Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).

Oct. 14, 2009

## East Orange Woman Convicted on All 22 Counts in Forced Labor Case Involving Young West African Women (More)

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NEWARK – A jury today convicted an East Orange woman of all 22 counts against her

in connection with the forced labor of more than 20 young West African females working in hair braiding salons in Newark and East Orange, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

The jury convicted Akouavi Kpade Afolabi, best known as “Sister,” but also known as “Gloria Lawson,” and “Celine,” after four hours of deliberations, following a four-week trial. The jury also found that more than \$25,000 in cash recovered from the defendant’s residence on the day of her arrest was the proceeds of the defendant’s crimes. Those funds will be forfeited.

U.S. District Judge Jose L. Linares scheduled sentencing for Jan. 21.

Many of the counts of conviction carry statutory maximum sentences of 20 years in prison. Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which a sentencing judge must consult in determining a sentence, Afolabi faces a range of between 151 and 188 months for the convictions. However, numerous other sentencing enhancements, which the government will argue apply, could increase the guidelines range to up to life in prison. The Sentencing Guidelines are advisory only, and Judge Linares will have discretion in imposing a sentence within or outside of the determined guidelines range.

Afolabi, 55, a legal permanent U.S. resident from Togo, was convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud; five counts of visa fraud; four counts of smuggling illegal aliens for financial gain; one count of conspiracy to commit forced labor, trafficking with respect to forced labor and document servitude; five counts of forced labor; five counts of trafficking with respect to forced labor; and one count of conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens for financial gain.

“The evidence presented at trial revealed that these young women – some as young as 10 years old – endured unconscionable indignities,” said Fishman. “The defendant ruled over her victims with threats, violence, even voodoo curses. We will seek an appropriately long sentence that reflects the seriousness of Afolabi’s conduct.”

“ICE aggressively targets criminals who exploit or victimize vulnerable individuals who are looking for a better life in the United States,” said Peter T. Edge, Special Agent in Charge of ICE’s Office of Investigations in Newark. “We are committed to identifying, dismantling and disrupting the international criminal organizations that are involved in any form of involuntary servitude.”

The case was tried by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Shana W. Chen and Nancy Hoppock of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Criminal Division in Newark. The case was investigated by Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Newark, who also provided trial assistance.

Testimony revealed that Afolabi committed forced labor involving more than 20 girls, ranging from 10 to 19 years old, from Togo and Ghana. Testimony from victims revealed that Afolabi and others involved – including her husband, Lassissi, who previously pleaded guilty – recruited the girls from impoverished West African villages, and got them into the United States with fraudulently obtained visas.

Once in the United States, Afolabi and her husband required them to work at hairbraiding salons for up to 14 hours per day, six or seven days a week. The women were also required to turn over all of their earnings, including their tips, to the defendants. The defendants did not allow the young women to keep their passports or identification; to speak with their families outside of the defendants' presence; or to make any outside friends. The women were rarely permitted to leave Afolabi's residence other than to work.

Testimony at trial from one victim, now 18 years old, revealed that all pay, including tips were collected by Afolabi – even a 50-cent tip in one instance. To maintain the girls' obedience, they were frequently threatened with voodoo curses, were physically beaten and psychologically abused.

Evidence also revealed that more than \$500,000 in cash deposits were made in bank accounts of the defendant's husband. The husband, testifying as part of her defense case, admitted during cross-examination that the girls surrendered, on average, more than \$7,400 of their earnings each month to the Afolabis.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the ICE, particularly Special Agent Ronald C. Conyers and Joseph D. Salavarría, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter T. Edge in Newark, with the investigation leading to today's conviction.