

## **Three Defendants Charged with Operating Forced Labor Scheme That Exploited Guatemalan Migrants at Ohio Egg Farms**

### **Victims Included Minors as Young as 14 or 15 Years Old**

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WASHINGTON—Today, a federal court in the Northern District of Ohio unsealed a 15-count superseding indictment charging three defendants with luring Guatemalan minors and adults into the United States on false pretenses, then using threats of physical harm to compel their labor at egg farms in Ohio. The indictment was announced by Head of the Civil Rights Division, Vanita Gupta, and U.S. Attorney Steven M. Dettelbach of the Northern District of Ohio. A fourth defendant was charged with related immigration offenses.

Aroldo Castillo-Serrano, 33, Ana Angelica Pedro Juan, 21, both of Guatemala, and Conrado Salgado Soto, 52, of Mexico, are charged with labor trafficking conspiracy. Castillo-Serrano is also charged with 10 counts of forced labor, and Salgado Soto and Pedro Juan are charged in 8 of those 10 counts. Castillo-Serrano and Salgado Soto are also charged with related immigration offenses, along with a fourth defendant, Pablo Duran Jr., 23, an American citizen.

According to the indictment, the defendants and their associates recruited workers from Guatemala, some as young as 14 or 15 years old, falsely promising them good jobs and a chance to attend school in the United States. The defendants then smuggled and transported the workers to a trailer park in Marion, Ohio, where they ordered them to live in dilapidated trailers and to work at physically demanding jobs at Trillium Farms for up to 12 hours a day. The work included cleaning chicken coops, loading and unloading crates of chickens, de-beaking chickens and vaccinating chickens.

The defendants threatened workers with physical harm and withheld their paychecks in order to compel them to work. Eight minors and two adults are identified in the indictment as victims of the forced labor scheme.

Castillo-Serrano and Pedro Juan are also charged with witness tampering, and Pedro Juan is further charged with making false statements to law enforcement.

Each of the 11 forced labor and forced labor conspiracy counts carries a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The charges involving immigration violations, witness tampering and false statements carry statutory maximum sentences of five years in prison.

An indictment is merely an accusation, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The investigation is ongoing.

This case is being investigated by the FBI Cleveland Office's Mansfield Resident Agency and the Department of Homeland Security. The case is being jointly prosecuted by Trial Attorney Dana Mulhauser of the Civil Rights Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Chelsea Rice of the Northern District of Ohio.