



# Department of Justice

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Northern District of Georgia

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## **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).