

CBP Officer Arrested in El Paso, Charged with Alien Smuggling and Drug Trafficking

Monday, February 10, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Texas

EL PASO, Texas – A Customs and Border Protection officer was arrested in El Paso on criminal charges related to his alleged involvement in a conspiracy to smuggle undocumented noncitizens for financial gain and alleged drug trafficking activity.

According to court documents, between on or about Dec. 21, 2023 and Feb. 5, 2025, Manuel Perez Jr., 32, of El Paso, allegedly smuggled and attempted to smuggle undocumented noncitizens into the United States for commercial advantage and private financial gain. The indictment alleges that, in multiple instances, Perez Jr. admitted a vehicle driven by an undocumented noncitizen at the Paso Del Norte Port of Entry in El Paso as part of human smuggling operations. Additionally, Perez Jr. allegedly conspired to possess a substance containing at least 5kg of cocaine from on or about Nov. 1, 2019 through and including Feb. 5, 2025, to distribute throughout Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina and elsewhere.

Perez Jr. is charged with one count of conspiracy to bring aliens to the United States for financial gain, three counts of bringing aliens to the United States for financial gain, and one count of conspiracy to possess a controlled substance with intent to distribute. If convicted, he faces a up to five years in federal prison for the human smuggling conspiracy charge, three to 10 years in prison for each of the three additional human smuggling charges, and 10 years to life for the drug trafficking charge. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Jaime Esparza for the Western District of Texas made the announcement.

This investigation was a joint effort by FBI El Paso, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Professional Responsibility, and Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, which comprise the FBI El Paso West Texas Border Corruption Task Force, along with the assistance of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations, U.S. Border Patrol El Paso Sector, Texas Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigations Division/Texas Highway Patrol, Homeland Security Investigations El Paso and the Drug Enforcement Administration El Paso Division.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Johnston is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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