

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Additional Charges Filed Against Suburban Chicago Couple in Federal Child Labor Trafficking Investigation

CHICAGO — A federal investigation into child labor trafficking has resulted in additional criminal charges against a couple residing in a Chicago suburb who allegedly forced two undocumented Guatemalan children to provide labor and services for the couple's private financial gain.

SANTOS TEODORO AC-SALAZAR, 24, and OLGA CHOC LAJ, 31, both of whom resided in Aurora, are charged with conspiracy to conceal, harbor, and shield from detection the two children, who were 15 years old and approximately ten years old when they entered the United States in 2019, according to an indictment returned in U.S. District Court in Chicago. The indictment also charges the defendants with individual harboring counts in connection with both victims, a forced labor charge relating to the younger victim, and a forced labor charge that was [previously filed](#) earlier this year in relation to the older victim.

The defendants are in law enforcement custody. Arraignments are scheduled for Dec. 30, 2020, at 11:00 a.m., before U.S. Magistrate Judge M. David Weisman.

The indictment was announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; James M. Gibbons, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations; and Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General in Chicago. Substantial assistance in the investigation has been provided by the Kane County State's Attorney's Office, the Aurora Police Department, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Prashant Kolluri.

According to the indictment, Ac-Salazar and Choc Laj are Guatemalan citizens who agreed to separately enter the United States unlawfully. The pair used smugglers and third parties to locate the victims in Guatemala as the children with whom the pair would unlawfully enter into the U.S., the indictment states. Once in the U.S., Ac-Salazar and Choc Laj allegedly harbored the victims in a residence in Aurora by, among other things, failing to enroll the victims in school, prohibiting them from leaving the residence except in limited circumstances, and instructing them to provide false information to third parties, including law enforcement authorities. Ac-Salazar and Choc Laj also are alleged to have forced the victims to provide labor and services for the couple's private financial gain.

The public is reminded that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

Topic(s):
Human Trafficking
Immigration
Labor & Employment

Component(s):
[USAO - Illinois, Northern](#)