

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 25, 2022

Brothers From Chicago Charged in Labor Trafficking Conspiracy

CHICAGO — Two brothers from Chicago have been arrested on a labor trafficking charge for allegedly forcing undocumented Mexican immigrants to work in the construction trade.

AGUSTIN ARIAS LOPEZ, 30, and JUAN ARIAS LOPEZ, 32, conspired to illegally bring two individuals from Mexico to the United States on the condition that they work for the brothers' construction business and repay the purported costs of their transport into the U.S., according to a criminal complaint filed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Chicago. After they arrived in Chicago, the undocumented immigrants worked 12-15 hours per day, seven days per week, in exchange for weekly payments from the Arias Lopez brothers of \$800 to \$1,000, the complaint states. From that sum, the immigrants were required to pay the Arias Lopez brothers \$500 per week, which the brothers claimed went towards not only the costs of the transport but also rent, as the immigrants resided in Agustin Arias Lopez's unfinished basement in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, the complaint states.

The complaint alleges that the Arias Lopez brothers threatened the immigrants with violence if they did not pay the money. On one occasion in November 2021, Agustin Arias Lopez allegedly pointed a handgun at one of the immigrants.

The complaint charges the Arias Lopez brothers with conspiracy to knowingly bring, transport, harbor, and induce aliens to come to, enter, remain in, and reside in the U.S. The brothers were arrested Thursday. A detention hearing in federal court in Chicago is set for March 28, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

The complaint and arrests were announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Emmerson Buie, Jr., Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI; Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General in Chicago; and Angie Salazar, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago office of Homeland Security Investigations. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles W. Mulaney.

The public is reminded that a complaint 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. The charge in the complaint is punishable by up to ten years in federal prison. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

Attachment(s):
[Download Arias Lopez et al complaint](#)

Labor & Employment
Violent Crime

Topic(s):
Firearms Offenses
Immigration
Human Smuggling

Component(s):
[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)
[USAO - Illinois, Northern](#)