

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: 11-18-2009

SUPPRESSION OPERATION NETS HUMAN SMUGGLERS/DRUGS

Deputies Seize Nearly 700 Pounds of Marijuana and \$10,000 Cash from Three U.S. Soldiers

51 Suspects and 37 Illegal Aliens Arrested in Less Than 48 Hours

(Maricopa County, Arizona) Sheriff Joe Arpaio's two-day crime suppression/ human smuggling operation has ended resulting in the arrest of 51 suspects and 37 illegal aliens, 34 of whom will be charged on state human smuggling charges, a class four felony. The other three suspected illegal aliens were turned over to Immigration and Custom's Enforcement.

During day two of the operation, Sheriff's deputies arrested three U.S. Army soldiers on possession of marijuana, drug transportation, money laundering and conspiracy when the soldiers were discovered to have 680 pounds of marijuana and \$10,000 in cash during a traffic stop in North Phoenix.

The three soldiers were wearing military clothing and identified themselves with U.S. Government issued military identification. The driver of that vehicle was also charged with driving on a suspended driver's license.

"It is during the enforcement of minor traffic violations like cracked windshields and broken tail lights that deputies come across offenders of more serious crimes like drug smugglers, human smugglers, and perhaps even murderers" Sheriff Arpaio says.

Sheriff Arpaio also stated that despite criticism of his suppression operations from the Obama administration, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, other politicians and some media that he will continue to conduct these types of operations and enforcing all aspects of illegal immigration laws.

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