

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: March 11, 2009

Arpaio Rescinds Special Arrangement with Mexican Consulate

Despite DOJ Investigation, Arrests of Illegal Immigrants Continue

(Phoenix, AZ) Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio has informed the Consul General of Mexico that the consulate staff no longer will have any special privileges when visiting jailed Mexican citizens but will be treated like any other visiting consulate.

The change in policy comes as a result of a letter sent on February 23, 2009 by Consul General Carlos Flores Vizcarra's in which he echoed complaints previously raised by local and national critics and groups opposed to the Sheriff's immigration enforcement policies.

Arpaio says, "For years Flores and I have had a good working relationship. I even extended special visitation status to his staff to ease their ability to communicate with incarcerated Mexican citizens. As of today, I am rescinding those favors. Instead of raising any genuine concerns, the Consul General chose to adopt the lies and distortions of the illegal immigration groups which attack me at every opportunity."

Arpaio says he finds complaints about his jail conditions by the Mexican consulate ironic. As the former Regional Director for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in Mexico City, Arpaio has first hand knowledge of the jail and prison conditions in Mexico.

"If anyone has been disingenuous here, it is Consul General Flores. Look at the deplorable way Mexican citizens and foreigners are treated in that country's jails and prison," Arpaio says. "Look at the violence erupting all along the Mexican border

News Release

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between drug cartels, human smugglers and the regional law enforcement authorities.”

Beyond the fact that consulate staff will no longer have 24 hour access to jailed Mexican inmates, Arpaio also informed Flores of the Sheriff’s intent to seek reimbursement of the housing costs associated with Mexican nationals currently incarcerated in Maricopa County jail facilities.

Despite the displeasure from the Consul General and yesterday’s announcement by the U.S. Department of Justice that the Sheriff’s Office will be investigated for civil rights violations, Sheriff Arpaio reiterates his commitment to enforcing all state and federal laws against illegal immigration as long as the laws to do so remain in place.

Just after receiving the letter from the Department of Justice, the Sheriff sent out his deputies who made three traffic stops netting 26 illegal aliens arrests, 15 of whom were booked into jail on felony human smuggling charges. The remaining were turned over to ICE pursuant to the Sheriff’s 287-G agreement.

During the course of Arpaio’s two year illegal immigration crackdown, deputies have arrested 2723 illegal aliens on both state and federal human smuggling laws. The Sheriff’s jail officials have investigated 22, 616 inmates who were ultimately determined to be illegal aliens and subsequently placed under ICE holds insuring they would not be released onto the streets of this county. END

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