



PRESS RELEASE

Dozens of Illegal Aliens Plead Guilty to National Defense Area Violations in May

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

EL PASO, Texas – Beginning in early May, additional criminal charges were filed against individuals who illegally entered or were found illegally in the United States and who had illegally entered the National Defense Area (NDA) that had been established along the U.S.-Mexico border from area bordering New Mexico, through El Paso County, to an area near Fort Hancock. As of May 19, 60 defendants had pleaded guilty and were convicted of these charges.

Title 50 United States Code (USC) 797 and Title 18 USC 1382 are among the federal statutes that establish criminal penalties for unlawful intrusions into areas designated as National Defense Areas. Title 50 USC 797 refers to the willful violation of defense property security regulation, which, pursuant to lawful authority, was approved by the Secretary of Defense — or a military commander designated by the Secretary of Defense — for the protection or security of Department of Defense property. Title 18 USC 1382 subjects anyone to criminal penalties who, within the jurisdiction of the U.S., entered upon a military post, fort, or yard — in these cases, the Texas National Defense Area — for a purpose prohibit by law or lawful regulation, that is illegal entry into the U.S.

“The role of this U.S. Attorney’s Office is to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States, seek just punishment for

those guilty of unlawful behavior, and to administer and enforce the nation's laws to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Margaret Leachman for the Western District of Texas. “These NDA-related charges are brought because the defendants violated of the federal law. These convictions area positive step in the judicial process of deterring illegal immigration, and I am very grateful to our El Paso Division staff and to our federal law enforcement and military partners for their diligent work in securing our borders.”

These cases are part of Operation Take Back America, a nationwide initiative that marshals the full resources of the Department of Justice to repel the invasion of illegal immigration, achieve the total elimination of cartels and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and protect our communities from the perpetrators of violent crime. Operation Take Back America streamlines efforts and resources from the Department’s Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETFs) and Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN).

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