

Enforcement and Removal

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What are high profile removals?



From Oct. 1, 2009 up to July 2015, ERO officers processed 1,536 high profile removals, of whom 1,151 were FAR cases, 277 were national security cases, 64 were human rights law section cases, 30 were of media interests and 14 had medical needs.

Since U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003, the agency has removed hundreds of thousands of aliens, some of whom fall under the category of high profile removals.

High profile removals are not only a danger to communities, but they also pose a threat to the officers who apprehend them and ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) officers who escort them back to their home countries, which may be as close as Mexico or as far as Yemen, Iraq, Rwanda and the Czech Republic.

Which criminal aliens fall under a high profile removal status? Most are fugitive alien removals, or FARs, meaning that he or she is wanted for a crime in another country regardless of the severity of the crime. FAR cases generally involve those who've committed serious crimes, including murder, rape, sexual abuse of a minor, drug offenses, alien smuggling, fraud or theft.

Some high profile removals are national security risks, such as suspected terrorists, those involved in counter-proliferation crimes or are on the Terrorist Watch list and/or the No-Fly list.

[Farooq Mandhai, 32, a Pakistani national](#), was a high profile removal who “had all the factors of a national security type high profile removal,” said Greta Stephens, one of ICE’s high profile removal program staff officers. Mandhai was a national security risk due to being identified as a convicted terrorist. He had been convicted of plotting to bomb electrical power stations and a National Guard Armory in south Florida, as part of a jihad mission. In May, ERO officers in Chicago deported Mandhai back to Karachi, Pakistan.

Another category of high profile removals are human rights or war crimes violators, such as the 50 fugitives ICE arrested in early August during [Operation No Safe Haven II](#), who are subject to repatriation to their countries of origin. Each subject was suspected of committing human rights abuses including torture, ethnic cleansing and forced sterilizations and abortions.

Those who have medical issues who may need medication or medical equipment during removal requiring ICE Health Service Corps involvement are also deemed high profile removals, as are those who generate media interest. The latter can be problematic if the media learns the removal date, said Stephens, who spent 12 years removing criminals, beginning when she was with ICE’s legacy agency, Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1996.

“Officers try to maintain a low profile when escorting people out of the country,” said Stephens. “The last thing we want to do is attract attention as it could negatively affect the success of the removal.”

Depending on the circumstances, high profile removals are escorted out of the country via commercial flights, charter flights or ICE’s own transportation through ICE Air Operations. With high profile removals, however, the removal process goes beyond simply making flight arrangements. The Domestic Operations Section within ERO’s Field Operations Division oversees the completion of an Operation Plan prior to deporting these individuals. This involves coordination with ERO’s Removals and International Operations Division, ICE International Operations Attachés, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and foreign government officials. “Deportation is the only remedy for an individual who illegally enters our country and then goes on to commit more crimes,” said ERO Executive Associate Director Tom Homan. “ERO prioritizes the removal of criminal aliens who pose a danger to national security or a risk to public safety, and we are proud to be carrying out this important mission.”

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ERO coordinates the removal of criminals, foreign fugitives and others ordered deported. Last year alone, ERO removed 315,943 individuals from the United States. ICE is focused on smart and effective immigration enforcement that prioritizes its resources based on those who pose the biggest threat to national security, border security and public safety. ICE’s civil enforcement efforts are based on priorities set by the Secretary of Homeland Security in [November 2014](#).

Members of the public who have information about foreign fugitives are urged to contact ICE by calling the toll-free ICE tip line at 1 (866) 347-2423 or internationally at 001-1802-872-6199. They can also file a tip online by completing ICE's [online tip form](#).