

375 gang members arrested in operation

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Body

WASHINGTON - Some **375 gang members** have been **arrested** in 24 states and the District of Columbia over the past two weeks as part of a yearlong operation targeting **gangs** with criminal immigrant **members**, the Homeland Security Department said Friday.

The **arrests** bring to 2,388 the number of **gang members** apprehended through Operation Community Shield, which combines local law enforcement with federal immigration forces. Of those **arrested**, 922 were **members** of Mara Salvatrucha **gangs**, which have ties to Central America.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said none of the **gang members** was identified as having ties to al-Qaida, but more than 260 of those **arrested** in the last two weeks have committed crimes like rape, murder and assault and brought drugs and weapons into neighborhoods.

Border Patrol agents accused of taking bribes

SAN DIEGO - Two U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to prosecute more immigrant smugglers were **arrested** for allegedly releasing border-crossers in exchange for cash bribes.

Mario Alvarez, 44, and Samuel McClaren, 43, released the illegal immigrants to a smuggling ring that operates in El Centro, about 120 miles east of San Diego, according to a federal complaint filed in January and unsealed Thursday.

The smugglers then allegedly took the migrants to Los Angeles.

The complaint said McClaren deposited \$85,900 in personal bank accounts, while Alvarez deposited \$82,000.

"The agents **arrested** today, who are supposed to represent the very best, epitomize the very worst," said Daniel Dzwilewski, special agent in charge of the FBI in San Diego.

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Person: MICHAEL CHERTOFF (57%)

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