

Immigrants without visas re-arrested

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Body

For years, foreigners **arrested** in the United States for overstaying their **visas** have often been let go with a promise that they leave the country. Not surprising, many never did leave.

For the past six months, however, the government has been quietly **re-arresting** many of these "absconders" on a U.S. Justice Department list about 1,000 names long.

As of Friday, 708 of the approximately 1,000 people on the government list had been **arrested** under what is being called the Alien Absconder Apprehension Initiative, INS official Nancy Cohen said.

INS official Russ Bergeron and others in the INS would not say whether any of those **arrested** had links to terrorism.

Attorneys for **immigrants** said the government is **arresting** foreigners to give the appearance it is winning the war on terror.

"It's just a public-relations stunt," said Sohail Mohammed, an immigration lawyer who has represented many New Jersey detainees caught in the government's post-Sept. 11 sweep.

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