

## **U.S. beefs up search for criminal immigrants**

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**Byline:** JULIA MALONE

### **Body**

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Washington --- The Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday released a "10 most wanted" list of noncitizen **criminals**, most of them sex offenders, who have evaded deportation orders and remain at large in the **United States**.

The campaign, which includes a toll-free tip line and posting photos and descriptions of fugitives on a Web site, is intended to aid the capture of dangerous **criminal immigrants**, said Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson.

Cox Washington Bureau

He said the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement will spend \$10 million on the expanded effort and double the number of fugitive apprehension teams nationwide to 16. The additional teams will be assigned to states with relatively large **immigrant** populations, including Georgia.

The effort focuses on the estimated 80,000 **criminals** who, by federal law, were supposed to have been removed from the country after serving their prison time. Hutchinson said the failure to deport these felons has been "a historic problem" for the federal government, which has not systematically monitored the nation's prisons and jails.

Michael J. Garcia, acting director of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said that before the law was tightened in 1996, felons who had aggravated offenses and who had served their prison time could be set free on bail, pending their deportation orders. Many then skipped bond and are still missing, Garcia said.

The new focus on **criminal** fugitives is not the first such campaign. The immigration service released a now nearly forgotten "most wanted" list of **criminal immigrants** a decade ago. That campaign made little headway and disappeared by the mid-1990s.

Meanwhile, the number of people who have taken flight after being ordered out of the country has steadily grown.

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