

Language barriers delay deaf Mexicans' bond review

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Body

Deaf Mexicans detained last week by federal agents in Sanford, N.C., were in Atlanta on Wednesday to have an immigration judge **review** their **bond**, but the hearing was postponed because of **language barriers**.

Bond ranging from \$ 20,000 to \$ 40,000 had been set because the **Mexicans** are undocumented aliens, immigration officials said.

Chief Immigration Judge Michael Creppy, who oversees the country's immigration judges from Falls Church, Va., wanted to use specially trained and certified courtroom interpreters who can translate the proceedings i into sign **language**. A search is under way for such people, said Rick Kenney, spokesman for the Executive Office for Immigration **Review** in Falls Church, Va.

After being bused from Charlotte, where they are being kept in protective custody at a motel, the **Mexicans** spent the day at INS headquarters downtown. The 14 adults and three children were returned to Charlotte. The hearing could be rescheduled at any time, said Thomas Fischer, district director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Atlanta office.

The investigation, meanwhile, seems to be focused more on the immigrants' illegal entry into the country rather than whether they were exploited by crew leaders and smugglers who forced them to sell trinkets in shopping centers, according to The Associated Press.

The INS is concerned solely with violations of immigration law, said Russ Bergeron, spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington. Criminal violations would be handled by the civil rights d division of the U.S. Justice Department, the U.S. attorney's office in Greensboro or the Sanford police.

No criminal charges have been filed in North Carolina, but in New York and Chicago, 10 people have been charged with bringing illegal immigrants into the country to exploit them.

After the raid last Friday in Sanford, INS supervisory agent Russ Parry said that other **deaf Mexicans** in the area would be apprehended. But there have been no other raids and more than 40 **deaf** workers who went into hiding after the INS raids have returned home, according to The A Associated Press.

The investigation is going "a lot slower than a normal case" because of **language barriers**, said Fischer. But he continued to characterize the **Mexicans** as victims and witnesses.

Classification

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Subject: IMMIGRATION (94%); IMMIGRATION LAW (93%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (90%); CITIZENSHIP (90%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (90%); JUDGES (90%); DEAFNESS (89%); **LANGUAGE & LANGUAGES** (89%); CRIMINAL OFFENSES (87%); INVESTIGATIONS (87%); **DELAYS** & POSTPONEMENTS (78%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (78%); SUITS & CLAIMS (78%); SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE FORCES (78%); WITNESSES (77%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (76%); DISABLED WORKERS (74%); SMUGGLING (72%); CIVIL RIGHTS (65%)

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