



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ERFREN ALVAREZ CONVICTED OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXTORTION IN ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S FIRST FARM LABOR TRAFFICKING CASES

Efren Alvarez (53, of Fresno) has been convicted of human labor trafficking and extortion in one of California's first farm labor trafficking cases, the Fresno County District Attorney's Office has announced.

Today, Mr. Alvarez was convicted by a Fresno County jury of one (1) felony count of Human Trafficking and three (3) felony counts of Extortion in order to maintain the victims' labor in March of 2016. In committing his crimes, the defendant utilized a complex scheme whereby he obtained the victims' visas, passports, and permits as collateral for a loan, and then threatened to harm and report each to immigration authorities if they did not continue to work for him. The victims' ultimately sought help from the United Farm Workers, who then reached out to law enforcement.

Mr. Alvarez faces a sentence of up to fifteen (15) years in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation when he is sentenced by the Honorable Jonathan Conklin on October 1, 2018, in Department 72 of the Fresno County Superior Court.

The case was investigated by the Fresno Police Department's Vice Unit, and was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Lynette Gonzales and Senior District Attorney Investigator Shari Hall of the Office's Human Trafficking Unit. In obtaining justice for the victims, DDA Gonzales would like to thank the Fresno Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, and the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission for their participation and support in this case and for their commitment to putting an end to human trafficking.

The Media may email FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov or contact Administrative Assistant Leslie Gillespie at (559) 600-4442 with questions.

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