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CRIME & COURTS - US

Ukranians in Court in Pennsylvania Human Trafficking Case

Published September 18, 2011 | Associated Press

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PHILADELPHIA -- Federal prosecutors will start making their case in U.S. District Court on Monday against Ukranian brothers charged in a rare human-trafficking case.

Federal prosecutors say five brothers smuggled desperate young adults from their homeland and forced them into bondage cleaning Targets, Walmarts and other sites for little pay.

The racketeering indictment says the Botsvynyuk brothers threatened to harm the workers or their families if they fought the demands.

Only Omelyan "Milo" and Stepan Botsvynyuk are on trial. Two brothers are fighting extradition and one has died.

Investigators don't accuse the retailers of involvement in the scheme. They say they usually hire cleaning crews through subcontractors.

Defense lawyer Joshua Briskin calls the charges serious -- and vows to fight them. He says the brothers were acquitted in a related case in the <u>Ukraine</u>.

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