

PRESS RELEASE

Owner of Boston Pizzeria Chain Indicted on Additional Forced Labor Charges

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

Defendant allegedly physically abused and threatened at least seven employees

BOSTON – The owner of Stash's Pizza has been indicted by a federal grand jury in Boston with forced labor charges for allegedly targeting and employing at least seven victims who lacked immigration status and forcing them to work while subjecting them to verbal and physical abuse, including repeated threats of deportation.

Stavros Papantoniadis, a/k/a "Steve Papantoniadis," 48, of Westwood, was indicted on four counts of forced labor and three counts of attempted forced labor. Papantoniadis has remained in federal custody since his arrest on March 16, 2023. He was previously charged with one count of forced labor.

According to court documents, Papantoniadis is the owner and operator of Stash's Pizza, a chain of pizzerias with locations in Dorchester and Roslindale, and previous locations in Norwood, Norwell and Randolph (d/b/a Boston Pizza Company), Weymouth (d/b/a Pacini's Italian Eatery) and Wareham, Mass. Over the course of several years, Papantoniadis allegedly targeted victims who lacked immigration status, employed them at depressed wages and demanded that they work, in most cases, six to seven days per week, at times for far more than eight hours per day and often without breaks or overtime compensation. Papantoniadis also allegedly withheld wages.

Papantoniadis allegedly forced or attempted to force at least seven victims to work for him and comply with excessive workplace demands by means of violent physical abuse; threats of violence or serious harm; and repeated threats to report victims to immigration authorities to have them deported. Specifically, it is alleged that Papantoniadis violently attacked one of the victims several times, including kicking him in the genitals, slapping and choking the victim and causing him to lose teeth. It is further alleged that, when three other victims separately expressed intentions to quit, Papantoniadis threatened one victim by telling the victim that he knew where he lived; he attacked another victim, forcing him to run to safety in the parking lot; and filed a

false police report on another victim who wanted to leave Papantoniadis' operation. According to court documents, at least four of the victims feared that if they did not continue working for Papantoniadis, he would hurt them and/or report them to immigration authorities.

It is alleged that Papantoniadis' conduct enabled him to obtain a substantial financial benefit and an advantage over other businesses in the local pizza market. He could operate Stash's Pizza with fewer and cheaper workers over whom he allegedly exercised significant control, all of which reduced his businesses' labor and operating costs.

The charges of forced labor and attempted forced labor each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Members of the public who have information or questions relevant to this case should call 888-221-6023, Option 5 or send an email with contact information to USAMA.VictimAssistance@usdoj.gov.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England; and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Timothy E. Moran, Chief of Rollins' Organized Crime & Gang Unit, and Brian A. Fogerty of Rollins' Civil Rights & Human Trafficking Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Updated March 29, 2023