

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

TIJUANA CARTEL LEADER EXTRADITED TO U.S.

Faces Drug Charges in the Southern District of California

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 7, 2013

Cesar Alfredo Meza-Garcia, a leader within the powerful Tijuana Cartel, was extradited from Mexico to the United States today to face drug charges in the Southern District of California. Meza-Garcia was arrested by Mexican law enforcement officers on September 26, 2012, at the request of the United States. Since his arrest in Mexico, Meza-Garcia has remained in custody pending extradition to the United States.

According to court documents, Meza-Garcia is the lead defendant in a 19-defendant indictment charging him with conspiracy to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine. He was a leader within the Tijuana Cartel, responsible for directing the movement of narcotics from Mexico into the United States. The indictment was handed up by a federal grand jury on June 15, 2012.

The charges stem from an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) led investigation known as Operation Jackhammer II. Operation Jackhammer II

focused on members of Meza-Garcia's importation cell, which was responsible for smuggling methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana into Chula Vista and San Diego for distribution throughout the state of California.

United States Attorney Duffy praised the Mexican government for its assistance in the extradition of Meza-Garcia and noted that violent drug cartels continue to menace both countries. "Drug trafficking is one of the most serious national security threats the United States faces. This is one more step toward securing the communities on both sides of the border."

Duffy also commended the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) for the coordinated team effort in handling this investigation. Agents and officers from HSI and the Chula Vista Police Department participated in this OCDETF investigation. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in the extradition. The OCDETF program was created to consolidate and utilize all law enforcement resources in this country's battle against organized crime and major drug trafficking organizations.

"This extradition serves as a stern warning to other fugitives who think they can evade U.S. law enforcement by hiding out in Mexico," said Derek Benner, special agent in charge for HSI in San Diego. "I commend our Mexican law enforcement partners for their hard work, which helped us immensely in our effort to dismantle a dangerous criminal enterprise that not only controlled a major drug smuggling corridor in Tijuana, but operated a large meth trafficking organization on both sides of the border."

The defendant is expected to be in federal court in San Diego tomorrow, March 8, 2013, at 10:30 a.m., before United States Magistrate Judge Jan Adler.

Law enforcement continues to seek the public's assistance in locating fugitive defendants Salvador Alcala-Gonzales, aka Chava, Miguel Angel Bravo-Pena, and Jose Luis Casillas, all of whom are believed to be in Mexico. Anyone with information regarding these fugitives may contact HSI at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE.

DEFENDANT

Case Number 12CR2414-WQH

Cesar Alfredo Meza-Garcia

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 846 - Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances

Maximum penalties: Life in prison, a \$10,000,000 fine and 5 years of supervised release

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations
Chula Vista Police Department

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendant committed the crimes charged. The defendant is presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.