

# Department of Justice



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Southern District of California

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## **EDUARDO ARELLANO-FELIX EXTRADITED FROM MEXICO TO THE UNITED STATES TO FACE CHARGES**

*Key Advisor to Arellano-Felix Organization's Leadership*

San Diego, CA – Eduardo Arellano-Felix, one of the alleged members of the Arellano-Felix Organization (AFO), was extradited today by the government of Mexico to the United States to face racketeering, money laundering, and narcotics trafficking charges in the Southern District of California.

The extradition was announced by United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy. Arellano-Felix was arrested by Mexican authorities in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico on October 25, 2008, following a gun battle with a Mexican Special Tactical Team. A final order of extradition to the United States was granted in 2010. After two years of unsuccessful appeals, Arellano-Felix arrived in the United States this afternoon. He is scheduled to make his initial appearance on Tuesday, September 4, 2012, in U.S. District Court in San Diego before the Honorable United States Magistrate Judge Barbara Lynn Major.

U.S. Attorney Laura Duffy, whose office secured the indictment against Arellano-Felix, stated, "This extradition is a significant step in our effort to bring another key figure in the Arellano Felix Organization to answer, in an American court of law, to very serious charges." Duffy also said, "We are grateful to the Government of Mexico for its assistance in the extradition."

"Today's extradition is a milestone in our fight against the Mexican drug cartels. I want to thank the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs for its tireless work in helping to ensure that Eduardo Arellano-Felix and numerous of his alleged co-conspirators face justice in the United States," said Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

"The extradition of Eduardo Arellano-Felix today marks the end of a 20 year DEA investigation into this vicious drug cartel", said William R. Sherman, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the San Diego Drug Enforcement Administration. "This extradition illustrates that DEA

and all its law enforcement partners will relentlessly pursue these drug traffickers until they are brought to justice."

San Diego FBI Special Agent in Charge Daphne Hearn commented, "The FBI is pleased with Mexico's efforts to bring to justice a leader from one of the most violent criminal enterprises in our history. The spirit of cooperation between our two countries is a powerful force in disrupting the criminal activities of these groups that instill fear and threaten the safety of our citizens in the border regions of the United States."

Long-reputed to be one of the most notorious multi-national drug trafficking organizations, the AFO controlled the flow of cocaine, marijuana and other drugs through the Mexican border cities of Tijuana and Mexicali into the United States. Its operations also extended into southern Mexico as well as Colombia.

The seventh superseding indictment (Case Number 97cr2520-LAB), charges Arellano-Felix with conducting the affairs of an illegal enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity (RICO), conspiracy to import and distribute cocaine and marijuana, as well as money laundering. The indictment alleges that the leadership of the AFO negotiated directly with Colombian cocaine- trafficking organizations for the purchase of multi-ton shipments of cocaine, received those shipments by sea and by air, in Mexico, and then arranged for the smuggling of the cocaine into the United States and its further distribution throughout the U.S. The indictment also alleges that the proceeds of the AFO's drug trafficking, estimated by law enforcement to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, were then smuggled back into Mexico.

Brothers and former leaders of the AFO, Benjamin Arellano-Felix and Francisco Javier Arellano-Felix, are currently serving sentences in the United States following their convictions for racketeering, drug trafficking, and money laundering charges.

This case is being investigated by agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and prosecuted in the Southern District of California by Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph Green, James Melendres, and Dan Zipp. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in the extradition. The investigation of Eduardo Arellano-Felix was coordinated by an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). The OCDETF program was created to consolidate and coordinate all law enforcement resources in this country's battle against major drug trafficking rings, drug kingpins, and money launderers.

The public is reminded that an indictment 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.

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