



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois*

Patrick J. Fitzgerald
United States Attorney

*Federal Building
219 South Dearborn Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353-5300*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2009
www.usdoj.gov/usao/iln

PRESS CONTACTS:
AUSA Amarjeet Bhachu 312-469-6212
Randall Samborn 312-353-5318

**U.S. INDICTS 15 ALLEGED MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES OF
CHICAGO DISTRIBUTION CELL OF LA FAMILIA MEXICAN DRUG CARTEL**

CHICAGO —Fifteen defendants allegedly involved in the Chicago distribution network of a Mexican drug-trafficking cartel were charged in seven separate indictments returned yesterday in Chicago, federal law enforcement officials announced today. The indictments, which follow arrests and charges that occurred initially in August, for the first time allege that these defendants and others were connected to the Chicago distribution cell of La Familia Michoacana, whose members and associates distributed thousands of kilograms of cocaine and collected tens of millions of dollars in the Chicago area since at least 2007.

During the investigation, the Chicago Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration seized approximately 250 kilograms of cocaine and \$8 million. The seizures occurred mostly in suburban locales, including Berwyn, Bolingbrook, Oak Lawn, Hickory Hills, Joliet and Justice, officials said.

The investigation, which began in 2007, is part of *Project Coronado*, a multi-agency narcotics-trafficking investigation that focused on La Familia's distribution network throughout the United States, and which just last month resulted in federal charges against more than 300 defendants in 19 states. The La Familia cartel is based in the state of Michoacan, in southwestern Mexico, and

is accused of being responsible for the importation of vast quantities of cocaine from Mexico into the United States.

According to the indictments, an individual in Mexico and members and associates of the La Familia cartel's distribution cell in the Chicago area formed a "command and control group designed for the efficient distribution" of thousands of kilograms of cocaine and the collection of cash proceeds from multiple wholesale distributors and their associates in the Chicago area and elsewhere. Managers and supervisors of the Chicago cell allegedly maintained frequent contact with the individual in Mexico regarding the organization's narcotics distribution activities.

All 15 defendants indicted yesterday were charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine and some defendants face additional narcotics trafficking-related charges. The indictments also seek forfeiture of as much as \$20 million, as well as the millions of dollars already seized. The charges were announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Stephen A. Luzinski, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of DEA's Chicago Field Division. The Illinois State Police, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, and the Chicago, Aurora and Arlington Heights police departments assisted in the investigation under the auspices of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

Most of the 15 defendants were charged initially in a criminal complaint filed in August, and together with five others charged previously, bring to 20 the total number of defendants linked to this investigation who are facing federal drug charges in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

One indictment against six defendants alleges the "command and control" structure of the Chicago distribution cell. It alleges that defendants **Jorge Luis Torres-Galvan** and **Jose Gonzalez-Zavala** were supervisors of the Chicago cell who took orders from the individual in Mexico who

monitored the cell's progress. Gonzalez-Zavala allegedly oversaw and instructed **Jorge Guadalupe Ayala-German** and **Ezequiel Hernandez-Patino** and other members of the cell in connection with the distribution of cocaine and collection of cash proceeds.

The indictment alleges that as part of the conspiracy, Gonzalez-Zavala made arrangements with wholesale distributors, including **Miguel Godinez-Gonzalez, Celso Corona-Sanchez, Carlos Gascar-Corona, Jose Rodriguez, Anai Magana Gonzalez, Jesus Hernandez** and **Bartolo Lucatero** concerning the distribution of cocaine and the collection of proceeds.

Another defendant in the main indictment, **Ismael Flores**, allegedly acted as a cash courier for the cell, and transported millions of dollars of U.S. currency from Chicago to Dallas, including on or about May 22, 2008 and April 16, 2009. Another defendant, **Oscar Bueno**, allegedly assisted Flores in the April 2009 cash transportation.

The conspiracy count against each defendant carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life and a \$4 million fine. If convicted, a judge would determine a reasonable sentence to impose.

The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Amarjeet Bhachu, Michael Donovan, Stephen Baker and Erika Csicsila .

An indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

A list of the cases and defendants follows:

United States v. Ayala-German, et al. (09 CR 546)

JORGE GUDALUPE AYALA-GERMAN, 44, of Joliet, detained;

JORGE LUIS TORRES-GALVAN, 31, of Danforth, Ill., aka “Jose Manuel Castell-Villot” and “Choche,” detained;

JOSE GONZALEZ-ZAVALA, 37, of Joliet, aka “Panda,” detained;

EZEQUEL HERNANDEZ-PATINO, 48, of Joliet, aka “Cheque,” detained;

ISMAEL FLORES, 35, of Dallas, aka “Bobby,” “Cunado” and “Primo,” released on bond;

OSCAR BUENO, 25, of Dallas, released on bond;

United States v. Flores-Candelario

OSCAR MANUEL FLORES-CANDELARIO, 34, of Broadview, aka “Manolo,” detained;

United States v. Godinez-Gonzalez, et al.

MIGUEL GODINEZ-GONZALEZ, 36, of Rockford, aka “Compadre” and “Pedro,” fugitive;

CELSO CORONA-SANCHEZ, 37, of Rockford, aka “Ponciano” and “Poncia,” detained;

JAVIER SOTO-MEDINA, 24, of Rockford, aka “Chuchi,” fugitive;

United States v. Hernandez

JESUS HERNANDEZ, 32, of Orland Park, aka “J.C.,” “Yesi,” “Yessy del 19” and “Jesse,” detained;

FRANCISCO RAMIREZ, 40, of Chicago, released on bond;

United States v. Gonzalez

ANAI MAGANA GONZALEZ, 25, of Hammond, Ind., aka “Ana,” detained;

United States v. Lucatero

BARTOLO LUCATERO, 29, of Chicago, aka “Pelon,” detained;

United States v. Rodriguez

JOSE RODRIGUEZ, 39, of Brookfield, Wis., detained.