



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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**LEADER OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY DRUG TRAFFICKING
ORGANIZATION PLEADS GUILTY TO COCAINE CONSPIRACY**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, today announced that ELVIS SANTANA, a leader of a 43-member crack and powder cocaine distribution network in Westchester County, pleaded guilty in White Plains federal court to conspiring to distribute approximately 22 kilograms of cocaine base, commonly referred to as "crack," and 6.5 kilograms of powder cocaine over an eight-month period.

SANTANA pleaded guilty to Count One of the Indictment, which alleges that, between February 2009 and October 2009, a drug trafficking organization distributed crack and powder cocaine across Westchester County, primarily in Yonkers and Peekskill, New York. In addition to pleading guilty to Count One of the Indictment, pursuant to a plea agreement, SANTANA agreed to forfeit \$1 million, the approximate proceeds that the Santana Organization earned from its narcotics trafficking activities during that time period.

According to the Indictment, SANTANA was a leader of a vast criminal organization whose core members delivered crack and powder cocaine, typically in amounts between 5 and 100 grams, to a network of other members of the organization who further distributed the narcotics. Deliveries were arranged via telephone conversations and through text messages and were usually made either inside buildings or apartments or on the street, often inside cars used to transport the narcotics.

The core members of the Santana Organization were regularly supplied with kilogram quantities of cocaine. Prior to obtaining cocaine, SANTANA and the other core members collected drug proceeds from the organization's distribution network and then went to pick up the cocaine. After picking up the cocaine, the core members brought the cocaine to stash locations where

some of the cocaine was cooked into crack and where quantities of crack and powder cocaine were repackaged into smaller packages for distribution.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Yonkers Police Department, the City of Peekskill Police Department, the Westchester County Police Department, the Village of Ossining Police Department, and the Rockland County Narcotics Task Force.

SANTANA faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory sentence of 10 years in prison.

The other defendants named in the Indictment are scheduled to appear at a pre-trial conference on March 19, 2010, at 10 a.m. before United States District Judge KENNETH M. KARAS. SANTANA's sentencing is currently scheduled for October 13, 2010 at 10 a.m.

Assistant United States Attorneys NICHOLAS L. McQUAID and DOUGLAS B. BLOOM are in charge of the prosecution.

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