

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Randy S. Grossman***

For Further Information, Contact:

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Mokhtari (619) 546-8402

For Immediate Release

Guatemalan National Indicted on International Cocaine Trafficking and Maritime Smuggling Charges

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – March 18, 2022

SAN DIEGO – A federal grand jury indictment was unsealed in San Diego against Guatemalan national Axel Bladimir Montejo Saenz, aka “Mosh,” aka “Kraken.”

The indictment returned on November 1, 2018, charges Montejo Saenz with Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine Intended for Unlawful Importation and Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine on Board a Vessel. Montejo Saenz remains a fugitive.

The indictment alleges that the conspiracy continued up to and including November 2018 and involved the distribution of cocaine in the countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico and elsewhere.

“Today marks another important step in disrupting the corridor of illicit drug trafficking from Central America into the United States,” said U.S. Attorney Randy S. Grossman. “This complex, multi-agency investigation demonstrates the breadth of the Department’s mission to stop the flow of narcotics well before they reach our shores.” U.S. Attorney Grossman thanked the prosecution team, Homeland Security

Investigations and the Drug Enforcement Administration for their excellent work on this case.

“This high-level indictment highlights the success of HSI’s collaborative efforts with the government of Guatemala and all of our foreign and domestic law enforcement partners. This partnership has resulted in significant seizures of narcotics, firearms and U.S. Currency from international cartels,” said Chad Plantz, Special Agent in Charge for HSI San Diego. “HSI is committed to bringing international drug trafficking cartel members to justice and to dismantling these criminal organizations.”

“DEA and our law enforcement partners are determined to bring members of transnational criminal organizations that inundate our country with cocaine to justice in the United States,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Shelly S. Howe. “We will continue to work with our foreign partners to stop the importation of illicit drugs.”

This operation is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) investigation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that threaten the United States by using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach that leverages the strengths of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies against criminal networks.

The public is reminded that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

DEFENDANT

Case Number 18cr4701-DMS

Axel Bladimir Montejó Saenz	Age: 35	Huehuetenango, Guatemala
aka “Mosh,” aka “Kraken,”		
aka “Gladiator,” aka “Baraja,”		
aka “Solin,” aka “Ron Zacapa,”		
aka “Captain Morgan,” aka “Corralejo”		

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

International Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances – Title 21, U.S.C., Section 959, 960, 963
Criminal Forfeiture – Title 21, U.S.C., Section 853

Maximum Penalty: Life in prison and \$10 million fine

Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine on Board a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States –
Title 46, U.S.C., Sections 70503, 70506(b)
Criminal Forfeiture – Title 46, U.S.C., Section 70507(a)

Maximum Penalty: Life in prison and \$10 million fine

AGENCIES

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
U.S. Coast Guard
HSI Attaché Guatemala City, Guatemala
HSI Attaché Mexico City Mexico
Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs
Department of Justice, Office of Enforcement Operations
Department of Justice, Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF)
Joint Task Force-Investigations (JTF-I)
Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S)
U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC)