



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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FEDERAL INDICTMENT PROMPTS
ARRESTS OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO
AND EL PASO, TEXAS

Earlier today, as a result of a year-long Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”) investigation, a seven-count indictment was unsealed charging 23 alleged members of a cocaine trafficking organization operating in Southern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas with federal drug trafficking and money laundering offenses. The investigation was designated as an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (“OCDETF”) case. OCDETF is a nationwide program that combines the resources and unique expertise of federal agencies, along with their local counterparts, in a coordinated attack against major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations.

Earlier today, more than 100 members of law enforcement, from numerous federal, state and local agencies, participated in executing the court ordered arrests of many of the defendants named in the Indictment, as well as the execution of 7 early morning court ordered search warrants at various locations in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Canutillo, Horizon City and El Paso, Texas.

The indictment alleges that the defendants engaged in a conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, between May 2010 and November 7, 2010. The indictment also includes two counts which allege money laundering.

According to the indictment, Pablo Fernando Fuentes, along with others named in the indictment, distributed cocaine from a compound on Applewood Road in Canutillo, Texas. The indictment alleges that Fuentes also stored cocaine and drug proceeds at a residence on Charter Park in El Paso, Texas. According to the indictment, the group's operations in New Mexico included delivering cocaine to Las Cruces, and picking up drug proceeds in Las Cruces and Sunland Park, New Mexico. The indictment further alleges that the cocaine distributed by the group came from a Mexican source, and that proceeds from the drug sales were delivered to individuals in El Paso, Texas, and Mexico.

INFORMATION REGARDING DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	YEAR OF BIRTH
Pablo Fuentes	Canutillo, TX El Paso, TX	1978
Oscar Carrasco	El Paso, TX	1973
Carmen Carrasco	Canutillo, TX	1963
Jesus de la Torre	Canutillo, TX	1981
Jesus L. Holguin	El Paso, TX	1978
Sandra Holguin	El Paso, TX	1984
Javier Fuentes	Canutillo, TX	1985
Jesus M. Gandarillo	Canutillo, TX	1984
Rodolfo Roma Lopez	El Paso, TX	1978
Daniel Navarro	Sunland Park, NM	1983
Willie Torres	Sunland Park, NM	1976

Jorge Perez	Canutillo, TX	1973
Juan Carlos Soto	Sunland Park, NM	1983
Mario David Difranco	El Paso, TX	1984
Leticia Leyva-Ojeda	El Paso, TX	1982
Claudia B. Ramirez	El Paso, TX	1976
Juan M. Munoz	Las Cruces, NM	1958
Ruben Jose Camarena	Arvada, CO	1982
Joaquin Carrasco	Canutillo, TX,	1969
Monica Sanchez	El Paso, TX	1972
Jaime Perez	Santa Teresa, NM	1977
Sixto Juan Aguirre-Infante	Mexico	1966
Lydia Esparza Fuentes	Canutillo, TX	1952

All of the defendants are charged in the drug trafficking conspiracy and, if convicted of that charge, face a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years imprisonment and up to life imprisonment. They also are subject to a \$4,000,000 fine, and five years of supervised release.

This case was investigated primarily by the DEA, but also with substantial assistance from the Internal Revenue Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Marshal's Service, United States Border Patrol, the New Mexico National Guard Counter Drug Task Force, the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department, the New Mexico State University Police Department, New Mexico State Police Department, Otero County Sheriff's Department, the New Mexico Department of Public Safety Motor Transportation Division and other federal, state and local agencies.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales praised the coordinated efforts that led to these charges:

“The aim of investigations like this one is to take drugs off the streets before they can enter our neighborhoods and schools. This investigation dismantled a drug trafficking ring in Southern New Mexico and West Texas that, during the last six months, imported cocaine from Mexico into Canutillo and El Paso, Texas. There, they re-packaged and distributed that cocaine to customers in El Paso, Las Cruces, Denver, Colorado and other parts of the United States. This indictment is the culmination of an intensive investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration working closely with federal, state and local law enforcement under the OCDETF program. My office, along with our law enforcement partners, remain committed to bringing to justice those who import and then distribute illegal drugs in our communities.”

DEA Special Agent in Charge Joseph M. Arabit said:

“By working together, DEA and our federal, state and local law enforcement partners are leveraging our respective resources and expertise to achieve results that we could not accomplish on our own. Our combined, concentrated efforts are making communities in West Texas and Southern New Mexico safer by disrupting the flow of dangerous drugs to our neighborhoods. Our efforts also are preventing the return of illicit proceeds to Mexico, where they continue to fund the activities of drug trafficking organizations.”

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Sarah M. Davenport. An indictment is only an accusation. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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