

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

**FEDERAL NARCOTICS AND FIREARMS CHARGES FILED AGAINST
TWELVE SAN DIEGO COUNTY RESIDENTS**

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – September 10, 2013

Federal grand jury indictments were unsealed today charging 12 San Diego County residents with federal drug trafficking and firearms offenses. The charges are part of a 10-month investigation by federal and local authorities that culminated with the arrests of dozens of people during raids this morning in the North County.

Of those charged federally, 10 were taken into custody during today’s sweep and two were still at large. Dozens of additional defendants will be prosecuted by the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office as part of the investigation, dubbed “Operation Mountain Shadow.”

The federal charges against the twelve defendants are the result of an intensive ten-month long investigation led by the Violent Trafficker Team (VTT) from DEA's San Diego division. Most of the defendants were arrested in today's massive law enforcement operation involving more than 150 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers. Officers also executed federal search warrants at six residences and businesses during the operation.

All of the federal defendants are charged with distributing methamphetamine or conspiring with others to distribute methamphetamine. Several are also charged with illegally possessing firearms, and one is charged with discharging a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

Those in federal custody include Paulino Aguirre, Johnny Castillo, Christopher Maldonado, John Caudle, Oscar Rodriguez-Torres, Miguel Rodriguez-Torres, Todd Young, Jose Tyoran and Israel Ornelas. Tyoran and Ornelas appeared in federal court this afternoon; they entered not-guilty pleas and a detention hearing was set for Sept. 12 at 9:30 a.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge David Bartick. The two federal fugitives are Vasquez and Juan Aguirre are not yet in custody.

The DEAs Violent Trafficker Team was created to respond to violent drug trafficking organizations in local communities throughout the nation. The Violent Trafficker teams are deployed on a temporary basis to assist state and local law enforcement in the disruption and dismantling of drug trafficking organizations. The Violent Trafficker Team's deployment in Poway and Ramona was intended to address a surge in violent crime and drug overdoses, particularly among young people, in those communities. The surge was directly connected to narcotics and firearms trafficking in the area.

During the Violent Trafficking Team's ten-month investigation, agents conducted multiple seizures of methamphetamine and also seized firearms including several 12-gauge shotguns, one sawed off shotgun, and several semi-automatic rifles.

DEFENDANTS

Case Number: 13cr3310

Juan Aguirre

Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

Unlawful possession of firearm (18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1))
Discharge of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense (18 U.S.C. § 924(c))

Paulino Aguirre
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

DEFENDANTS **Case Number: 13cr3311**

Johnny Castillo
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)
Unlawful possession of firearm (18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1))

DEFENDANTS **Case Number: 13cr3312**

Jose Ernesto Dinero
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1))

DEFENDANTS **Case Number: 13cr3313**

Christopher Maldonado
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

Jose Tyoran
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

John Caudle
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

Michelle Vasquez
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

Israel Ornelas
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

DEFENDANTS **Case Number: 13cr3314**

Oscar Rodriguez-Torres
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)
Unlawful possession of firearm (18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(5))

Miguel Rodriguez-Torres
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)

DEFENDANTS **Case Number: 13cr3315**

Todd Young
Charges: Distribution of methamphetamine and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846)
Unlawful possession of firearm (18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1))

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances – Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 846

Maximum penalty: Life imprisonment and \$4,000,000 fine

Distribution of Controlled Substances – Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1)

Maximum penalty: Life imprisonment and \$4,000,000 fine

Unlawful Possession of Firearm – Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)

Maximum penalty: 10 years' imprisonment and \$10,000 fine

Criminal Forfeiture – Title 21, United States Code, Section 853

Maximum penalty: Forfeiture of proceeds

AGENCIES

Drug Enforcement Administration

Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

United States Border Patrol

United States Marshals Service

San Diego County Sheriff's Department

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.