



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley  
Western District of Louisiana**

---

United States Courthouse • 300 Fannin Street, Suite 3201 • Shreveport, Louisiana 71101-3068 • (318) 676-3600  
United States Courthouse • 800 Lafayette Street, Suite 2200 • Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-7206 • (337) 262-6618

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2010  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/law>

CONTACT: STEPHANIE A. FINLEY  
PHONE: (337) 262-6618  
FAX: (337) 262-6783

## **MAJOR DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON**

*Approximately 111 Kilograms of Cocaine and Approximately \$1.8 Million  
Seized From Members of Defendant's Organization*

**LAKE CHARLES, La.** – The main organizer and supervisor of a lucrative drug trafficking organization that is responsible for transporting kilo quantities of cocaine and marijuana from the Brownsville, Texas area, was sentenced today to 12.5 years in federal prison, followed by five years supervised release, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced. Pedro Mendez Ramos, 41, of Church Point, La., was sentenced by U. S. District Judge Patricia Minaldi for continuing a criminal enterprise and money laundering conspiracy.

Ramos and 17 others were indicted on a variety of drug trafficking, money laundering and firearms charges following an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation dubbed "Operation Fowl Play" and "Rio Gallo." While under Ramos' direction, this drug trafficking organization was responsible for transporting and distributing cocaine and marijuana (primarily cocaine), from the Brownsville, Texas area to the Church Point, La. area. From Church Point, the drugs would then be distributed to Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, and other parts of Louisiana, with large amounts of drug proceeds being transported back to Brownsville, Texas and ultimately, Mexico. Ramos, an avid dog fighter and rooster fighter, with over 300 roosters and 60 fighting pit bulls of his own, utilized dog fights and rooster fights as a networking tool in order to recruit members to transport and sell cocaine and marijuana for his organization. The organization utilized various methods to conceal their cocaine, to include 18 wheelers with hidden compartments, trucks with hidden compartments, and rooster cages with false bottoms. The Ramos organization was supplied cocaine and marijuana directly from members of the "Gulf Cartel," a multi-national drug trafficking organization located in Matamoros, Mexico.

At one point, the Ramos organization had amassed so much cash from the sale of cocaine that Pedro Ramos attempted to purchase Canal Oil Refinery, an oil refinery located in Church Point, La. in order to launder the organization's drug trafficking proceeds. The United States Drug

Enforcement Administration (DEA), with the help of both state and local law enforcement agencies, seized approximately 111 kilograms of cocaine and approximately \$1.8 million from members of Ramos' drug trafficking organization, along with additional real property with an estimated value of approximately \$1 million dollars located in both Louisiana and Texas.

U. S. Attorney Finley stated: "Organized drug trafficking threatens our safety, disrupts our communities, and destroys lives. This case is an example of how federal, state and local partnerships can succeed in dismantling large international criminal organizations. Our office is committed to combating drug trafficking in this district."

Michael J. De Palma, Special Agent in Charge of Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, stated: "We are pleased with today's sentencing of Mr. Ramos. Narcotics trafficking generates huge amounts of currency that must be concealed using elaborate money laundering schemes and other sophisticated means. Following the money trail takes us to the leaders of the narcotics organizations. Leaders of drug trafficking organizations often don't touch the drugs, but they always touch the money."

The remaining co-defendants have previously pled guilty and have been sentenced, with the exception of one co-defendant who is awaiting sentencing and faces a statutory, minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years to life in prison.

This case was investigated by DEA - Lafayette, La. and Brownsville, Texas offices, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (Lafayette and Brownsville), Louisiana State Police, and the Cameron County District Attorney's Office, Brownsville, Texas. The DEA - Lafayette, La. Post of Duty, is a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) initiative comprised of special agents of the DEA, and agents from the Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Police Department, Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Office, Acadia Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Landry Parish Sheriff's Office, Opelousas Police Department and the Louisiana National Guard.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys J. Collin Sims and John Luke Walker .

###