

U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

One of the most important functions of this office is to prosecute violent drug traffickers associated with organized crime groups. Our Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) attorneys work with DEA and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to target regional and international drug trafficking organizations. In the Eastern District of California, many of those groups are poly-drug traffickers, that is, they trade in methamphetamine, marijuana and cocaine, and have strong ties to Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Developments in three cases last month illustrate our work in this area.

On February 7, we announced that the last of 39 defendants in a major case pending in U.S. District Court in Fresno pleaded guilty. The case involves members and associates of Nuestra Familia, a prison-based, highly violent organization that controls numerous street-level Norteño gang members involved in drug trafficking in the Central Valley. The defendants in the case pleaded guilty to distributing large quantities of methamphetamine from Stanislaus County to Kern County. Many of those defendants are facing lengthy prison sentences.

On February 13, a federal grand jury in Sacramento indicted 14 members of an alleged drug trafficking ring with ties to the Sinaloa drug cartel in Mexico. The indictment alleged that the defendants, from Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties, imported methamphetamine and cocaine, and cultivated marijuana, which was distributed throughout the United States. In the course of the investigation, agents seized over 80 pounds of methamphetamine and several firearms, including assault rifles.

On February 26, in U.S. District Court in Sacramento, the sixth of nine defendants in a case involving the seizure of huge amounts of methamphetamine was sentenced to over 17 years in prison. The case involved the search in 2010 of a regional methamphetamine supply hub in Gilroy, operated by the La Familia Michoacán Mexican drug cartel. That search led to the seizure of 610 pounds of methamphetamine, 16 pounds of cocaine, and some firearms, and the discovery of several marijuana cultivation sites. Five other defendants in the case have previously been sentenced – four of them received sentences ranging from nine to 16 years in prison.

Many towns in the Eastern District of California have been adversely impacted by violence associated with armed drug traffickers with ties to Mexican drug cartels. Working with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners, we are working to disrupt and dismantle these organizations. We are having success, but we recognize that there can be no quick victory in this effort.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

United States Attorney

Benjamin B. Wagner