

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Treasury Designates Honduran Drug Traffickers

4/9/2013

Action Targets Honduran Link to Colombian and Mexican Narcotics Operations

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") today announced the designation of Honduran national Jose Miguel Handal Perez (a.k.a. "Chepe Handal"), as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker ("SDNT") pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act ("Kingpin Act"). Also designated today are Handal's wife, Ena Elizabeth Hernandez Amaya; his father, Jose Miguel Handal Larach; and several of Handal's companies located in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Companies designated today include Corporación Handal, which is comprised of various business ventures including a general merchandise and auto parts store, Supertiendas & Autopartes Handal, JM Troya, a motorcycle brand, and Cleopatra's, a clothing store. Today's actions generally prohibit U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these designees, and also freeze any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

Chepe Handal is the head of a Honduran-based drug trafficking organization ("DTO") responsible for the coordination and distribution of multi-ton shipments of cocaine from Colombian sources of supply into Honduras. These supplies are distributed to Mexican DTOs, including the Sinaloa Cartel and Los Zetas, led respectively by Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman Loera and Miguel Trevino Morales. Handal invests in and coordinates the receipt of drug-laden aircraft departing from Apure, Venezuela into Honduras via clandestine airstrips. He also facilitates the movement of these drug shipments out of Honduras by land to Guatemala, where members of Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel take possession.

"Chepe Handal plays a critical role in the transportation and distribution of drug shipments between South America and the Sinaloa Cartel and Los Zetas," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "Today's action underscores OFAC's commitment to targeting and disrupting key facilitators of the drug trade wherever they may be."

On March 3, 2011, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida indicted Chepe Handal with one count of conspiracy to distribute cocaine with knowledge that it will be unlawfully imported into the United States.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Miami Field Division, Special Agent in Charge Mark R. Trouville stated, "Freezing the assets of international drug traffickers like Chepe Handal is akin to taking the weapons from their trafficking arsenal. Chepe Handal will be brought to justice and his criminal enterprise dismantled."

Today's action would not have been possible without the support of the DEA and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida. Since June 2000 OFAC has identified 97 drug kingpins and designated more than 1,200 businesses and individuals. Penalties for violations of the Kingpin Act range from civil penalties of up to \$1.075 million per violation to more severe criminal penalties. Criminal penalties for corporate officers may include up to 30 years in prison and fines of up to \$5 million. Criminal fines for corporations may reach \$10 million. Other individuals face up to 10 years in prison and fines for criminal violation of the Kingpin Act pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code.

To view a chart of the Chepe Handal organization, click [here](#) .

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