

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Treasury Sanctions the Network of Drug Lord Rafael Caro Quintero

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Designation Targets Companies and Individuals in Guadalajara, Mexico

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today designated 18 individuals and 15 entities linked to Rafael Caro Quintero, a Mexican drug trafficker. Rafael Caro Quintero is a significant Mexican narcotics trafficker who began his criminal career in the late 1970s when he and others, including Juan Jose Esparragoza Moreno (a.k.a. “El Azul”), formed the Guadalajara drug cartel and amassed an illicit fortune. Caro Quintero was the mastermind behind the kidnapping and murder of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent (SA) Enrique Camarena in 1985. Following his capture in the same year, Caro Quintero was convicted in Mexico for his involvement in SA Camarena’s murder and drug trafficking and is currently serving a 40 year prison sentence there.

Caro Quintero is also wanted in the Central District of California on criminal charges related to the kidnapping and murder of SA Camarena as well as drug trafficking. Caro Quintero continues his alliance with Esparragoza Moreno’s organization and its key players, such as the previously-designated individual Juvencio Ignacio Gonzalez Parada. The President identified Caro Quintero and Esparragoza Moreno as significant foreign narcotics traffickers pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act) in 2000 and 2003, respectively.

Today’s action, pursuant to the Kingpin Act, generally prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these designees, and also freezes any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

“Rafael Caro Quintero has used a network of family members and front persons to invest his fortune into ostensibly legitimate companies and real estate projects in the city of Guadalajara” said Adam Szubin, Director of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). “With the assistance of the Government of Mexico, OFAC continues to target drug traffickers, the laundering of their ill-gotten gains, and those who assist them in their illicit activities.”

“Today’s designation is another critical tool that helps us pursue hardened career criminals and keep them on the run, making it even more difficult to use the drug assets they have amassed,” said Gary Haff, Acting Chief of DEA’s Financial Operations section. “No amount of effort can clean their dirty money, paid for with their violence and by their victims, including DEA Special Agent Kiki Camarena. DEA is committed to seeing that justice is done, and we will not rest until they and their global criminal networks have been put out of business, their assets have been seized, and their freedom has been taken from them.”

Today’s action targets six of Rafael Caro Quintero’s family members, including his children -- Hector Rafael Caro Elenes, Roxana Elizabeth Caro Elenes, Henocho Emilio Caro Elenes, and Mario Yibrán Caro Elenes-- his wife, Maria Elizabeth Elenes Lerma, and his daughter-in-law, Denisse Buenrostro Villa. Humberto Vargas Correa, a longtime personal secretary of Caro Quintero, was also designated. These individuals own and/or manage a variety of companies in Guadalajara, which were also designated today. These companies include: ECA Energeticos, S.A. de C.V., a gas station company; El Baño de Maria, S. de R.L. de C.V., a bath and beauty products store; Pronto Shoes, S.A. de C.V. (a.k.a. CX-Shoes), a shoe company; and Hacienda Las Limas, S.A. de C.V., a resort spa.

In addition, OFAC targeted members of the Sanchez Garza family, which is based in Guadalajara and involved in money laundering operations on behalf of Caro Quintero and also linked to Esparragoza Moreno. Targets include the family patriarch, Jose de Jesus Sanchez Barba, along with his three sons, Mauricio Sanchez Garza, Jose de Jesus Sanchez Garza, and Diego Sanchez Garza. Mauricio Sanchez Garza is currently a fugitive from money laundering charges in the Western District of Texas (San Antonio). OFAC also designated the following additional Sanchez Garza family members today: Beatriz Garza Rodriguez, wife of Jose de Jesus Sanchez Barba; Hilda Riebeling Cordero, wife of Mauricio Sanchez Garza; and Ernesto Sanchez Gonzalez and Ruben Sanchez Gonzalez, both cousins of the Sanchez Garza family. In addition to Sanchez Garza family members, OFAC also designated the following individuals for acting on behalf of the Sanchez Garza family: Michael Adib Madero; Diego Contreras Sanchez; and Luis Cortes Villasenor. These designated individuals own and/or manage the following Guadalajara based companies, which were also designated today: Grupo Fracsa, S.A. de C.V. and Dbardi, S.A. de C.V., real estate development companies; Grupo Constructor Segundo Milenio, S.A. de C.V., a construction company; Restaurant Bar Los Andariegos (a.k.a. Barbaresco Restaurant), a restaurant; and Piscilanea S.A. de C.V. (a.k.a. Albercas y Tinas Barcelona), a swimming pool company.

Today’s action would not have been possible without the support of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Internationally, OFAC has designated more than 1,200 businesses and individuals linked to 103 drug kingpins since June 2000. 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 up to \$5 million. Criminal fines for corporations may reach \$10 million. Other individuals could face up to 10 years in prison and fines pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code for criminal violations of the Kingpin Act.

For a chart relating to today’s actions click [here](#). 

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