

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Treasury Targets Major Money Laundering Network Operating Out of Colombia

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Trade Based Money Laundering Network Supported Narcotics Traffickers Ayman Joumaa and Evaristo Linares Castillo

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today announced the designation of Colombian nationals Isaac Perez Guberek Ravinovicz and his son, Henry Guberek Grimberg, as well as 29 other individuals and entities, including companies located in Colombia, Panama, and Israel, as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNTs). These 31 individuals and entities together form a money laundering network responsible for laundering hundreds of millions of dollars in drug money connected to drug trafficking organizations, including Ayman Saied Joumaa and Linares Castillo who were both previously designated by the Treasury Department. In a separate action, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida and the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Miami Field Division announced the filing of criminal charges against four defendants, including Isaac Perez Guberek Ravinovicz, Henry Guberek Grimberg, and Johanna Patricia Ceballos-Bueno -- designated by Treasury today -- all Colombian nationals, for their participation in an international money laundering conspiracy in which they laundered millions of dollars for transnational drug trafficking organizations.

Today's action builds upon the U.S. government's continued campaign to target global narcotics networks, including that run by Joumaa whose global narcotics enterprises have stretched from South America to Africa and have benefited terrorist groups such as Hizballah. By designating the individuals and entities behind this money laundering organization, the Treasury Department is taking another step to protect the international financing system from abuse by narcotics traffickers, money launderers, and terrorists.

"Money laundering is the lifeblood of the narcotics trafficking world," said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. "Our action against this major money laundering network strikes a powerful blow at the illicit profits flows of criminals like Ayman Joumaa and Linares Castillo."

"Drug traffickers only motive to enter the illegal drug trade is the money, and they will go to any length to hide and protect their proceeds. These bad actors often depend on international businesses to facilitate the illegal movement of their drug profits. Whether you are a successful businessman or a secretary, if you assist drug traffickers you will face the same justice," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Mark R. Trouville.

Isaac Perez Guberek Ravinovicz, a Colombian national, and his son, Henry Guberek Grimberg, a dual Colombian and Israeli national, lead a money laundering network based in Bogota, Colombia that launders narcotics proceeds on behalf of numerous drug trafficking organizations, including organizations based in Colombia. Narcotics traffickers such as Ayman Saied Joumaa, previously designated by the Treasury Department in January 2011, and Jose Evaristo Linares Castillo, designated in February 2013 are known to have laundered their drug proceeds through this money laundering network.


Several family members and associates of Guberek Ravinovicz and Guberek Grimberg were also designated today for materially supporting the principals' money laundering activities and/or for helping to manage their companies. The family members include Henry Guberek Grimberg's two brothers, Felipe Guberek Grimberg, a businessman currently residing in Israel, and Arie Guberek Grimberg, a licensed soccer (futbol) agent. The business associates include Johanna Patricia Ceballos Bueno, the secretary of Guberek Ravinovicz and Guberek Grimberg, who manages the day-to-day operations of the network from their offices in Bogota.

Guberek Ravinovicz and Guberek Grimberg primarily rely upon the use of ostensibly legitimate textile companies within Colombia to engage in trade-based money laundering. Using bank accounts for these companies, as well as accounts belonging to a series of shell companies in Panama, Guberek Ravinovicz and Guberek Grimberg provide a means for traffickers to transfer narcotics proceeds back to Colombia from locations all over the world, with drug money transiting additional accounts in Spain, Hong Kong, the United States, Mexico, China, Israel, the Cayman Islands, and Venezuela, as well as other locations in Europe and Central America.

Today's action, taken pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act), generally prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these entities and individuals, and freezes any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

This action would not have been possible without the support of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The Treasury Department has designated more than 1,200 individuals and entities 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 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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