

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## Press Center



## Treasury Sanctions Colombian Criminal Organization and Drug Lord

1/30/2013

### *Action Targets Los Rastrojos Organization and Drug Lord Diego Perez Henao*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today designated the Colombian criminal organization, Los Rastrojos, and drug trafficker, Diego Perez Henao (alias "Diego Rastrojo"), as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNTs) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). This action, taken pursuant to the Kingpin Act, generally prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with this individual and organization, and also freezes any assets either may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

"By targeting this violent criminal organization currently operating in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, we are taking steps to expose their activities and undermine their operations," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "OFAC will use these sanctions against key leaders and facilitators of this criminal organization so long as they continue their criminal behavior."

Los Rastrojos emerged from the now extinct Cali and North Valle drug cartels in Colombia. It is a network of armed drug trafficking groups operating in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela that manufactures, transports, and protects cocaine loads as well as directs extortion and debt collections. Colombian authorities refer to criminal organizations like Los Rastrojos as "Bandas Criminales" or BACRIM, which are organized groups of drug traffickers as well as former paramilitary and guerrilla members of the United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Diego Perez Henao has been involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activity for over twenty years; having started as a cocaine laboratory operator and then rising in notoriety due to his association with notable North Valle drug cartel leaders such as Wilber Varela, Jaime Alberto Marin Zamora, and the Calle Serna brothers, Javier Antonio and Luis Enrique, all previously designated as SDNTs by OFAC. Perez Henao operated Los Rastrojos drug trafficking organization throughout the North Valley region of Colombia, as well as the Pacific coastal regions of western Colombia. He was the main source of supply for numerous multi-ton loads of cocaine smuggled into the U.S., owning and coordinating airborne and maritime cocaine shipments destined for the U.S. through Venezuela to Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. He was arrested in June 2012 in Venezuela and extradited to Colombia in July 2012, where he is facing numerous criminal charges. In addition, a Federal Grand Jury in the Southern District of Florida has indicted Perez Henao; charging him with conspiring to manufacture and distribute cocaine into the U.S. Despite the June 2012 arrest of Perez Henao, Los Rastrojos still operates today.

Today's action, supported by the Drug Enforcement Administration, is part of OFAC's ongoing efforts under the Kingpin Act to apply financial measures against significant foreign narcotics traffickers worldwide. Since June 2000 the President has identified 97 drug kingpins and OFAC has 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 Los Rastrojos and Diego Perez Henao, click [here](#) .

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