

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## Press Center



## Treasury Designates Head of Aviation Drug Smuggling Operation

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*Action Targets Colombian Drug Trafficking Organization Tied to the FARC*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today announced the designation of Colombian national Jose Evaristo Linares Castillo as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker (SDNT) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). Jose Evaristo Linares Castillo leads a Villavicencio, Colombia-based drug trafficking organization that oversees the manufacturing and air smuggling of thousands of kilograms of cocaine from Colombia and Venezuela, through Central America into Mexico, and then, ultimately, into the United States.

Through his partnership with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the “FARC”), a U.S.-designated narco-terrorist organization, and previous relationships with major Colombian traffickers Daniel Barrera Barrera and Pedro Oliveira Guerrero Castillo, Linares Castillo has become one of the largest cocaine sources for drug-laden aircraft departing from Apure, Venezuela to Central America. In Central America, Honduran and Guatemalan criminal organizations handle the logistics of receiving and transporting the drug loads out of Central America and into Mexico for further distribution to Mexican drug trafficking organizations such as Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel. The Kingpin Act generally prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with this individual and freezes any assets the designee may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

“The Linares Castillo organization is a significant source of supply for multiple violent drug cartels that exploit vulnerable Central American countries as key transit points for the shipment of narcotics into Mexico for further distribution into the United States,” said the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Director Adam J. Szubin. “We continue to aggressively target key transporters and logistic coordinators for one of the most strategic drug routes between Central and South America.”

Jose Evaristo Linares Castillo was arrested by Colombian authorities on May 25, 2012, and is currently pending extradition to the United States. He is charged in two separate U.S. district courts for drug trafficking and related offenses. On June 14, 2011, the Southern District of Florida issued a superseding indictment charging Linares Castillo with drug trafficking and multiple money laundering offenses. On July 5, 2012, the Southern District of New York issued a superseding indictment charging Linares Castillo with multiple drug trafficking, narco-terrorism and material support offenses.

Today's action would not have been possible without support from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Attorneys' Offices in New York City and Miami. Since June 2000, the President has identified 97 drug kingpins, and OFAC has designated more than 1,200 businesses and individuals, pursuant to the Kingpin Act. 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 Linares Castillo Organization click [here](#) .

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