

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

# Treasury Sanctions Regional Commander of Mexico's CJNG in Coordination with Justice and State Actions

April 14, 2021

WASHINGTON – Yesterday, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) identified Audias Flores Silva (Flores Silva) as a significant foreign narcotics trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). Flores Silva (a.k.a. "Jardinero") is one of the Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion's (CJNG) regional commanders in control of large portions of CJNG territory along the Pacific coast of Mexico, including the state of Nayarit. CJNG is a violent Mexican drug trafficking organization responsible for trafficking a significant proportion of the fentanyl and other deadly drugs that enter the United States. OFAC took this action in coordination with the Department of Justice, which unsealed an indictment against Flores Silva. OFAC also coordinated with the Department of State, which has announced an up to \$5 million reward for information leading to Flores Silva's arrest or conviction. OFAC's action was the result of close and ongoing collaboration with the Los Angeles Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) division.

"OFAC is committed to working with our interagency partners to target all facets of the most significant Mexican drug trafficking organizations, whose members continue to flood our streets with fentanyl and other deadly drugs," said OFAC Director Andrea Gacki. "Flores Silva, who traffics massive amounts of opioids and cocaine, represents a major threat to the United States."

Yesterday, an indictment charging Flores Silva on drug trafficking and weapons offenses was unsealed. A grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia charged Flores Silva with a number of crimes, including conspiracy to distribute cocaine and heroin intending, knowing, and having reasonable cause to believe that such substances would be unlawfully imported into the United States and using a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking conspiracy. The case is being prosecuted by the Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice. Flores Silva previously served

a five-year prison term in the United States in connection with a conviction for narcotics trafficking. After his release, he returned to Mexico. In 2016, Mexican authorities arrested Flores Silva after being accused of orchestrating an April 2015 ambush against Mexican police officers in Soyatlan, Jalisco. Flores Silva was later released from Mexican prison after fighting his charges in Mexican courts.

“This indictment and the Treasury Department sanctions show that the Department of Justice, together with our law enforcement partners, will aggressively investigate and criminally prosecute the violent cartels and kingpins who import illegal drugs into our communities,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Nicholas L. McQuaid. “The Department will continue to pursue cartels like the CJNG, and alleged kingpins like Flores Silva, as long as they continue doing harm to the American people.”

“These actions are yet another demonstration of the outstanding coordination with our Federal partners to protect our communities from the deadly surge of drugs coming from these violent cartels,” said DEA Los Angeles Special Agent in Charge Bill Bodner. “These efforts illustrate our ongoing commitment to bring CJNG and drug traffickers like Flores Silva, who pose a threat to the American people, to justice.”

Today, the U.S. Department of State's Narcotics Rewards Program also announced a reward offer of up to \$5 million for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Flores Silva.

Tips can be submitted to DEA by phone (+1-213-237-9990) and by email ([MenchoTips@usdoj.gov](mailto:MenchoTips@usdoj.gov)). Tips can also be submitted to HSI by calling the HSI tip line (+1-866-347-2423) or through their website (<https://www.ice.gov/tipline>).

## **PREVIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS ON CJNG AND LOS CUINIS**

Yesterday's Kingpin Act designation marks OFAC's fourteenth action against CJNG, which was designated on April 8, 2015, along with its leader, Ruben Oseguera Cervantes (a.k.a. “Mencho”), for playing a significant role in international narcotics trafficking. In previous actions, OFAC designated a wide range of businesses and individuals linked to CJNG and its close ally, the previously designated Los Cuinis Drug Trafficking Organization. The previously designated businesses in Mexico include shopping centers, real estate companies, agricultural companies, a music promotion business, and a luxury boutique hotel. Many of these Mexican entities have engaged in the laundering of drug proceeds and represent attempts by CJNG and Los Cuinis to integrate themselves into the legitimate economy.

Among the previously designated individuals are those who play critical roles in CJNG's drug trafficking activities, including money laundering, and those who facilitate corruption activities on behalf of CJNG and Los Cuinis.

The U.S. Department of State's [Narcotics Rewards Program](#) has issued a reward offer of up to \$10 million for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of Oseguera Cervantes.

Tips can be submitted to DEA by phone (+1-213-237-9990) and by email ([MENCHOTIPS@usdoj.gov](mailto:MENCHOTIPS@usdoj.gov)).

As a result of yesterday's OFAC designation, all property and interests in property of the designated individual that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or persons within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons.

Since June 2000, more than 2,200 entities and individuals have been sanctioned pursuant to the Kingpin Act for their role in international narcotics trafficking. Penalties for violations of the Kingpin Act range from civil penalties of up to \$1,548,075 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 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.

[More information on the individual designated yesterday.](#)

[View the Kingpin Act chart on the individual designated yesterday](#) .

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