Treasury Sanctions Major Ecuadorian and Mexican Narcotics Traffickers With Ties to the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Wilder Emilio Sanchez Farfan and Miguel Angel Valdez Ruiz pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14059 for materially contributing to the illicit activities of major Mexican cartels to traffic cocaine into the United States. Today's action is the result of collaboration between OFAC and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

“Drug trafficking is a grave threat to Americans, international security, and the U.S. financial system,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “Treasury is designating these two individuals for their support to one of Mexico’s most dangerous criminal organizations and for the delivery of cocaine to U.S. markets.”

Wilder Emilio Sanchez Farfan was designated for having engaged in, or attempted to engage in, activities or transactions that materially contributed to, or pose a significant risk of materially contributing to, the international proliferation of illicit drugs or their means of production. Sanchez Farfan, an Ecuadorian national, is one of the most significant drug traffickers in the world today. Working from Guayaquil, Ecuador, Sanchez Farfan transports multi-ton quantities of cocaine over land from manufacturing labs in the south of Colombia to Ecuador where shipments are transported by land, air and maritime vessels (including commercial shipping containers), and land-based vehicles through Central America, Mexico, and ultimately the United States.

Sanchez Farfan is a major cocaine source of supplier to the Sinaloa Cartel. He uses associates in Mexico to facilitate multi-ton cocaine shipments to Sinaloa Cartel members in Culiacan, Manzanillo, and Ensenada in Mexico. The Sinaloa Cartel, which is based in the Mexican state of Sinaloa, is one of the oldest and most powerful drug trafficking organizations in Mexico and was designated on December 15, 2021 pursuant to E.O. 14059.

Additionally, Sanchez Farfan has sent representatives of his organization to Mexico to meet with members of the Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG) to establish a working relationship to import multi-ton quantities of cocaine into Mexico from Ecuador. CJNG, known
for its brazen violence, is among the most powerful drug trafficking organizations in the world and was designated on December 15, 2021 pursuant to E.O. 14059.

The Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG are responsible for trafficking a significant proportion of the fentanyl, cocaine, and other deadly drugs into the United States. Increasingly, cocaine sold in the United States is laced with fentanyl, which increases the possibility of death for its users.

**Miguel Angel Valdez Ruiz** was designated for having engaged in, or attempted to engage in, activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a significant risk of materially contributing to, the international proliferation of illicit drugs or their means of production. Valdez Ruiz, a Mexican national, is a drug trafficker in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico who imports cocaine from Ecuador and is supplied by and works directly with Sanchez Farfan. Valdez Ruiz serves as an intermediary between Sanchez Farfan and Ismael Zambada Garcia, a Sinaloa Cartel leader. Zambada Garcia, who was designated on December 15, 2021, pursuant to E.O. 14059, is the subject of a State Department Narcotics Rewards Program [offer](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0592). Valdez Ruiz has direct contact with Zambada Garcia and is responsible for helping him receive Sanchez Farfan's cocaine from Ecuador. Valdez Ruiz uses his fleet of private aircraft to transport cocaine from Ecuador to Sinaloa, Mexico. He coordinates with associates in Mexicali, Ensenada, and Tijuana, Mexico to transport cocaine from Sinaloa to the southern border of California and into the United States.

In 2019, a federal drug trafficking indictment was returned in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California against both Sanchez Farfan and Valdez Ruiz, who are currently fugitives from the charges.

**SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

As a result of today’s action, all property and interests in property of the designated individuals or entities 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. U.S. persons may face civil or criminal penalties for violations of E.O. 14059.

Today’s designation is part of a whole-of-government effort to counter the global threat posed by the trafficking into the United States of illicit drugs, including fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, that is causing the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans annually, as well as countless more non-fatal overdoses with their own tragic human toll. To further the
policy objectives that prompted E.O. 14059, OFAC will continue to identify drug cartels, transnational criminal organizations, and their financial facilitators and enablers that are the primary sources of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals that fuel the current opioid epidemic. Since the signing of E.O. 14059, OFAC has designated foreign persons from Brazil, China, Colombia, and Mexico for having engaged in, or attempted to engage in, activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a significant risk of materially contributing to, the international proliferation of illicit drugs or their means of production. OFAC, in coordination with its U.S. government partners and foreign counterparts, will continue to designate and pursue accountability for foreign illicit drug actors wherever they may be.

U.S. sanctions need not be permanent; sanctions are intended to bring about a positive change of behavior. Consistent with the findings of Treasury Department’s October 2021 Sanctions Review, the removal of sanctions is available for persons designated under counter narcotics authorities who demonstrate a change in behavior and no longer engage in activities linked to international illicit drug trafficking or support to other designated persons.

For information concerning the process for seeking removal from any OFAC list, including the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List), please refer to OFAC’s Frequently Asked Question 897. Additional information regarding sanctions programs administered by OFAC.

For more information on the individuals designated today.

View the DTO Chart on the individuals designated today. 📷

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