

## Press Center

### Treasury Designates Financial Empire of Key Mexican Money Launderer Blanca Margarita Cazares Salazar

12/12/2007

**Washington, D.C.**—The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today designated Mexican money launderer Blanca Margarita Cazares Salazar (Blanca Cazares) and 19 companies and 22 individuals in Mexico that are part of her financial network as specially designated narcotics traffickers subject to economic sanctions pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act.

"Today's action exposes Blanca Cazares' sophisticated money laundering apparatus and subjects it to powerful economic sanctions," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "This Kingpin Act designation also puts the global community on notice about the illicit activities of this network."

Blanca Cazares and her widespread money laundering organization act as fronts for Mexican drug kingpins Ismael Zambada Garcia (Mayo Zambada) and Victor Emilio Cazares Salazar, leaders of Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel. Blanca Cazares, also known as Blanca Cazares Gastelum, is the sister of Mexican drug kingpin Victor Emilio Cazares Salazar. The President identified Ismael Zambada Garcia and Victor Emilio Cazares Salazar in 2002 and 2007, respectively, as significant foreign narcotics traffickers pursuant to the Kingpin Act.

Blanca Cazares' money laundering organization operates throughout Mexico and in California, and is run by members of her immediate and extended family. Arturo Meza Gaspar, Blanca Cazares' spouse, and their three adult children, Arturo, Gipsy, and Lizbeth Meza Cazares, were designated today because of their key roles in the ownership and control of Blanca Cazares' front companies and assets in Mexico. Other key financial associates of Blanca Cazares designated today include Jorge Normando Patraca Ponce, Roberto Perez Verduzco, Maria Tiburcia Cazarez Perez, Epifanio Zazueta Urrea, and Marco Antonio Olivas Ojeda. Blanca Armida Aguirre Sanchez, a Tijuana, Baja California-based money launderer who works with Blanca Cazares, was also named by OFAC.

Blanca Cazares owns and controls a complex network of businesses located throughout Mexico in Culiacan, Sinaloa; Guadalajara, Jalisco; Tijuana, Baja California; and Mexico City, Distrito Federal. The OFAC designation targets key Blanca Cazares front companies based in Culiacan, Sinaloa, including *Consorcio Inmobiliario del Valle de Culiacan S.A. de C.V.*, *SEPRIV S.A. de C.V.*, *Cazper Importaciones S.A. de C.V.*, and *Patraca S.A. de C.V.* (a.k.a. *Boutique Patraca*). Also targeted are three Tijuana-based money service businesses including *Mexglobo S.A. de C.V.*, *Multiservicios AGSA S.A. de C.V.*, and *AGBAS Consultores S.A. de C.V.*, all owned or controlled by Blanca Cazares associate Blanca Armida Aguirre Sanchez.

Today's action also targeted *Toys Factory S.A. de C.V.* and *Hacienda Cien Años de Tijuana S. de R.L. de C.V.*, a popular restaurant. Both entities are located in Tijuana, Baja California.

In addition, the OFAC action exposes *CHIKA'S*, a chain of approximately 20 jewelry and cosmetics boutiques located in eight Mexican states, which are operated by *Sin-Mex Importadora S.A. de C.V.* in Mexico City and *Comercializadora Jalsin S.A. de C.V.* in Guadalajara, Jalisco. This particular network of Blanca Cazares front companies also uses the entities *Comercializadora Toquin*, *Comercial Joana*, *Comercial Domely* and *Comercializadora Brimar's* to facilitate the stores' transactions both internationally and within Mexico.

Ismael Zambada Garcia is a U.S. fugitive and the State Department has offered a \$5 million dollar reward for information leading to his arrest. In January 2003, the

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia returned a federal indictment against Ismael Zambada Garcia for his narcotics trafficking activities. Victor Emilio Cazares Salazar is also a U.S. fugitive and is the subject of a February 2007 federal indictment for drug trafficking and money laundering in the Southern District of California.

This action is part of ongoing efforts under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act to apply financial measures against significant foreign narcotics traffickers worldwide. More than 300 businesses and individuals associated with the 68 drug kingpins have been designated pursuant to the Kingpin Act since June 2000. Today's designation would not have been possible without key support from Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field offices in Los Angeles and San Diego; the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) field office in San Diego; the ICE Attache Mexico City; DEA's Special Operations Division; DEA's Financial Operations Division; and the U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California.

Today's designation action freezes any assets the 42 designees may have under U.S. jurisdiction and prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these individuals and entities. Penalties for violations of the Kingpin Act range from civil penalties of up to \$1,075,000 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 \$5,000,000. Criminal fines for corporations may reach \$10,000,000. Other individuals face up to 10 years in prison for criminal violations of the Kingpin Act.

For a complete list of the individuals and entities designated today, please visit: <http://www.treasury.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/actions/index.shtml>.

#### REPORTS

- [Designation Chart](#)