

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center

Treasury Designates Sinaloa Cartel Plaza Bosses

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Action Targets Critical Drug Trafficking Corridor along the Arizona-Mexico Border Controlled by the Sinaloa Cartel

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today announced the designation of eight Mexican nationals as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNT) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). The eight individuals, Cenobio Flores Pacheco (a.k.a. "Luis Fernando Castro Villa"), Jesus Alfredo Salazar Ramirez, Guillermo Nieblas Nava (a.k.a. "Adelmo Niebla Gonzalez"), Ramon Ignacio Paez Soto, Felipe De Jesus Sosa Canisales, Armando Lopez Aispuro, Jose Javier Rascon Ramirez, and Raul Sabori Cisneros, all operate as plaza bosses for the Sinaloa Cartel.

Each of the eight plaza bosses operates as a Sinaloa Cartel leader within their specific area of operation along the Sonora-Arizona corridor of the U.S.-Mexico International Boundary, which extends for nearly 375 miles. The Sinaloa Cartel depends on the plaza bosses, leaders of a particular geographic area, along the corridor to coordinate, direct, and support the smuggling of illegal drugs from Mexico into the U.S. and the smuggling of illicit contraband from the U.S. into Mexico. Plaza bosses rely on violence to maintain their positions, using sicarios (hitmen) to control a specific geographic area. Since Arizona is contiguous with the U.S.-Mexico International Boundary, the Tucson and Phoenix metropolitan areas are major trans-shipment and distribution points for contraband smuggling out of and into Sonora, Mexico.

"Today's designation marks another step in OFAC's efforts to specifically target the narcotics traffickers responsible for the horrific acts of violence committed along the Arizona border with Mexico," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "We will continue to work alongside our partners in federal law enforcement as well as the Mexican Government to financially cripple and dismantle the Sinaloa Cartel."

The eight individuals designated today work on behalf of Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman Loera, and Ismael "Mayo" Zambada Garcia -- the leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel -- as well as Gonzalo Inzunza Inzunza "Macho Prieto," a top lieutenant of the Sinaloa Cartel. Mexican authorities have previously arrested Jesus Alfredo Salazar Ramirez, Ramon Ignacio Paez Soto, and Raul Sabori Cisneros. Today's action generally prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these designees, and also freezes any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

Today's action would not have been possible without the support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Joint Field Command-Arizona, U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Mexican authorities also provided essential support to OFAC.

"CBP's Arizona Joint Field Command Targeting Enforcement Unit played a major role in dealing the Sinaloa-based drug cartel a financial blow that will undoubtedly affect their ability to operate as a criminal enterprise. The Arizona Joint Field Command's Targeting Enforcement Unit has been and will continue to be a committed partner in the collective effort of denying, degrading and disrupting operations of criminal organizations," said Jeff Self, Commander, CBP, Joint Field Command-Arizona.

"Diplomatic Security Service special agents worked in concert with our federal law enforcement partners to uncover evidence vital to designate these dangerous narcotics traffickers," said Wes Weller, Special Agent in Charge of the DSS Los Angeles Field Office. "The traffickers threaten the safety and security of Americans along the Arizona border with Mexico, and must be brought to justice."

"In order to put organizations like the Sinaloa Cartel out of business, we must continue to utilize every tool available to ensure that these criminal groups and their associates cannot exploit the U.S. financial system," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Doug Coleman. "Today's actions severely curtail the Sinaloa Cartel's ability to use legitimate commerce to mask their illicit money laundering activities and reflect DEA's global efforts to weaken its leadership and bring it to justice."

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 the Sinaloa Plaza Bosses' organization, click [here](#) .

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