



U. S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois

Gary S. Shapiro
Acting United States Attorney

Dirksen Federal Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street, Fifth Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353-5300

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PRESS CONTACTS:
AUSA Nathalina Hudson 312-353-1123
AUSA/PIO Randall Samborn 312-353-5318

**THIRTY-NINE ALLEGED ASSOCIATES OF TWO CHICAGO AREA DRUG
TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS FACING FEDERAL NARCOTICS CHARGES**

CHICAGO — Two leaders of separate drug trafficking organizations that operated independently while sometimes supplying each other with multiple kilograms of cocaine were arrested and are among 39 defendants who are facing federal drug charges, federal and local law enforcement officials announced today. The charges contained in a criminal complaint stem from an investigation led jointly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration that began in July 2011, with assistance from other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Agents yesterday executed three federal search warrants at the same time as they began arresting defendants in the Chicago area, as well as in Indiana, Texas, and California. Agents seized approximately 2.5 kilograms of cocaine, \$176,800 cash, and several guns. The two alleged leaders, JESUS RAMIREZ-PADILLA and HUMBERTO JIMENEZ, were among 27 defendants who were arrested, while the whereabouts of four others were accounted for, and the eight remained fugitives. Previously, during the year-long investigation, agents seized more than 13 kilos of cocaine, 10 kilos of marijuana, 1.5 kilos of heroin, and approximately \$75,000.

All 39 defendants were charged with various drug distribution offenses in a criminal complaint that was filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court and unsealed yesterday following the arrests. The defendants who were arrested began appearing yesterday before Magistrate Judge Maria Valdez in U.S. District Court and remain in federal custody pending detention hearings scheduled for next week.

Yesterday's operation brings to nearly 100 the number of defendants who have been arrested and charged in Chicago with federal or state drug trafficking offenses in just the last three weeks.

Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, praised the dedication and teamwork of the FBI, DEA, and HSI agents who worked diligently with the Chicago Police Department to disrupt these alleged drug-trafficking organizations. Mr. Shapiro announced the charges with William C. Monroe, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Jack Riley, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration; Gary Hartwig, Special Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Chicago; and Garry F. McCarthy, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department. The U.S. Marshals Service and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division also assisted, together with the Illinois State Police, the Cook County Sheriff's Police, and the Berwyn and Oak Lawn police departments. The investigation was conducted under the umbrella of the U.S. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

According to the complaint affidavit, the investigation determined that Ramirez-Padilla, 39, and Jimenez, 26, both of Chicago, each led their own drug trafficking organization. Both organizations regularly bought and sold multiple kilos of powder cocaine on Chicago's southwest side. Each organization had its own wholesale distributors, drug couriers, stash houses, workers and

suppliers. While the Ramirez and Jimenez organizations operated independently, they sometimes supplied each other with kilograms of powder cocaine. Both organizations took steps to protect themselves from detection by law enforcement, including: using code words to disguise references to narcotics and other items; regularly replacing telephones; using different vehicles to transport drugs; and engaging in counter-surveillance techniques.

The 205-page affidavit details conversations among various defendants that were intercepted on 26 different telephones during the investigation pursuant to court-authorized electronic surveillance.

Sixteen defendants, who were charged in two separate conspiracies to possess and distribute cocaine and/or heroin, face a mandatory minimum of 10 years to a maximum of life in prison and a \$10 million fine. The remaining defendants face maximum sentences up to 20 or 40 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$2 million or \$5 million. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Nathalina Hudson, Joseph Thompson, and John Kness.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

A list of the defendants follows:

UNITED STATES v. RAMIREZ-PADILLA, et al., 12 CR 755

Note: each defendant resides in Chicago unless a different city or suburb is noted.

<u>DEFENDANT</u>	<u>AGE</u>		<u>STATUS</u>
JESUS RAMIREZ-PADILLA	39		Arrested
HELEIN RAMIREZ-PADILLA	27		Arrested
LUIS RAMIREZ	25		Arrested
FRANCISCO HERNANDEZ	32		Arrested
BENITO MOJICA	47		Arrested
ALBERTO RAMIREZ-CUEVAS	25		Fugitive
IGNACIO HERNANDEZ	35	Cicero	Arrested
DANIEL MONTEZ	44		Arrested
GILBERTO MACIAS-GUTIERREZ	34		Arrested
PABLO TOVAR	29		Arrested
JUAN RAMOS	33		Arrested
GUSTAVO CAMPOS	47		Arrested
ANTONIO MARGARITO RAYGOZA	32		Fugitive
ALEJANDRO CRUZ	30		Arrested
ALBERTO CHAVEZ-LOPEZ	33		Arrested
JORGE MELGOZA	21		Arrested
MARTIN RODRIGUEZ	48		In custody
EBERARDO MEDINA-DENIZ	34		Arrested
REYES JIMENEZ	33		Fugitive
MARCOS BAHENA	25		Arrested
DIEGO AHUET	26		Arrested
JUAN ESTRADA	28		Arrested

JAVIER CAMPOS	43		Arrested
ERNESTO GALINDO	31		Fugitive
ARTURO GUTIERREZ	31		Fugitive
PEDRO MORALES	32	Melrose Park	Fugitive
JESUS ADAN MIRANDA-CAMARENA	30		Arrested
JUAN VALENCIA	34		Arrested
HUMBERTO JIMENEZ	26		Arrested
LUCIANO RAMIREZ-PADILLA	38		Fugitive
ANTONIO MANZO-MADRIGAL	52	Sacramento, Calif.	Fugitive
ALBERTO ESTRADA	26	Del Rio, Tex.	Fugitive
TERESA MANZO-MADRIGAL	49	Del Rio, Tex.	Arrested
FRANCISCO JAVIER FLORES-CORTES	27	Cicero	Arrested
JOSE RIVERA	48		Arrested
GABRIEL GARCIA	23		Fugitive
JORGE VASQUEZ	30	Round Lake Beach	Arrested
JOSE PADILLA	40		Arrested
ROBERT BLANKENSHIP	39	Gary, Ind.	Fugitive

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