



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Ali Salem

**CHICAGO MAN SENTENCED TO 11 YEARS, 9 MONTHS
IN "CRYSTAL METH" CONSPIRACY**

A Chicago resident was sentenced today in federal court in Detroit for conspiring to distribute and import into the United States, through the metropolitan Detroit area, millions of tablets of pseudoephedrine, knowing that those pills would be used to manufacture a controlled substance, specifically, "crystal meth," announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Detroit.

Receiving the sentence was Ali Salem, 30, of Chicago, Illinois.

United States District Judge Gerald E. Rosen sentenced Salem to 141 months imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "As this investigation amply shows, international cooperation can and does thwart high-volume purveyors of the precursor drugs used to make 'crystal meth.' Today's sentence should serve as a strong deterrent to those who would consider importing crystal meth or its precursor chemicals in the future. I commend

the excellent work of ICE, DEA and our Canadian partners – thanks to them, our special initiative to stamp out meth distribution is working.”

Previously, the information presented to the court at the time of Salem's plea in August 2007 revealed that between November 2002 and May 2003, Ali Salem, Shahin Judeh and several co-conspirators paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash to co-conspirators in Montreal, Canada to acquire over ten million pills of pseudoephedrine, and engaged in significant efforts to smuggle the pills into the United States across the Windsor-Detroit border and then transport them to western locations in the United States for use in the manufacture of methamphetamine. The plans of the conspiracy were revealed and thwarted through the use of undercover ICE agents posing as corrupt truck drivers, and through the cooperative investigative efforts of ICE, the Drug Enforcement Administration and Canadian Law Enforcement Authorities.

Special Agent in Charge Brian Moskowitz said, “The conviction and sentencing of Ali Salem serves a crippling blow to an organization that conspired to smuggle over 10 million tablets of pseudoephedrine into the United States. When manufactured into methamphetamine, this pseudoephedrine represented more than 1,840 kilograms of methamphetamine with an estimated street value in excess of \$36,000,000.00.” “The seizure of 10 million tablets of pseudoephedrine will have a dramatic impact on the availability of methamphetamine on the streets of our cities.”

Co-Defendants Shahin Judeh and Enrique Sanchez (also known as Enrique Barajas) were extradited from abroad for prosecution in this case, and have pleaded guilty to identical charges as Salem. Each is awaiting sentencing. Co-Defendant Alberto Flores, who was previously a fugitive, was apprehended in Kentucky in relation to a separate offense, and is scheduled to appear on these charges later this month. Co-Defendants Mohammad Awad and Nasir Baste were each sentenced to 87 months and 84 months imprisonment, respectively, last year.

The investigation of this case was conducted by agents of the Bureau of Immigration

and Customs Enforcement and the Drug Enforcement Administration, with the assistance of Canadian Law Enforcement Authorities. The case was prosecuted by Special Assistant United States Attorney Joe Allen and Assistant United States Attorney Carl Gilmer-Hill.