

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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## Terry Goddard Announces Arrests in Major Arms Trafficking Case

(Phoenix, Ariz. -- May 6, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the breakup of a major weapons trafficking operation in Phoenix that supplied hundreds of AK-47 assault rifles, other long guns and handguns to criminal organizations in Mexico.

Three men were arrested this morning, including George Iknadosian, owner of the X Caliber Guns store in north Phoenix. Search and seizure warrants were executed at the store and at his Glendale home. About 1,300 weapons were seized at the two locations today.

Iknadosian, 46, Cesar Bojorguez-Gamez, 28, and Hugo Miguel Gamez, 26, were charged with five crimes: forgery, fraudulent schemes, participation in or assisting a criminal syndicate, money laundering and illegal control of an enterprise or illegally conducting an enterprise. Bojorguez-Gamez is a Mexican citizen living in the Phoenix area as a legal resident; Gamez is a U.S. citizen living in the Phoenix area.

The arrests and seizures follow an 11-month investigation by the Phoenix Police Department, the U.S. Marshal's Office, and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Goddard was joined at the press conference by representatives from those agencies and the Mexican Attorney General's Office.

"The illegal sale of weapons figures prominently in many cross-border crimes," Goddard said. "We are targeting these sales and working closely with other law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and Mexico to stop them."

Iknadosian is accused of selling the weapons to straw buyers who were buying them for resale to persons he knew would transport them across the border to Mexico. Many of the guns purchased from X Caliber have been recovered in Mexico, some in the possession of drug smugglers. In one recent seizure in Mexico, an AK-47 bought from X Caliber was found with 26 additional rifles, two grenade launcher attachments and three tons of marijuana.

Today's arrests come less than two months after Attorneys General from the United States and Mexico announced at the end of a three-day meeting in Phoenix "a new era of binational cooperation to fight organized crime in both countries." Arms trafficking was identified as one of four principal areas of increased law enforcement cooperation.

Illegal arms sales figured prominently in the death last year of some 2,000 Mexican law enforcement officers. Phoenix has been identified as one of the top five metropolitan areas in the country where weapons and ammunition are obtained and illegally smuggled into Mexico.

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