

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

Brothers Plead Guilty To Being Aliens In Possession of a Firearm

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - April 24, 2009

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Fernando Jaquez-Mercado pled guilty today in federal court in San Diego to an information charging him with being an alien in possession of a firearm, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g). Fernando Jaquez-Mercado tendered his guilty plea before United States Magistrate Judge Cathy Ann Bencivengo subject to final acceptance by United States District Court Judge Janis L. Sammartino at the time of sentencing.

On April 14, 2009, Felipe Jaquez-Mercado, Fernando Jaquez-Mercado's brother, tendered a guilty plea to the same charge, being an alien in possession of a firearm, before United States Magistrate Judge Anthony J. Battaglia subject to final acceptance by United States District Court Judge Janis L. Sammartino at the time of sentencing.

According to court records, the brothers were arrested by federal agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Border Patrol, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and

Explosives during simultaneous federal search warrants executed at each of their homes in February 2009. At each residence, agents seized the firearms, along with large amounts of cash. According to court documents, the brothers were the purported leaders of the Samurai alien smuggling organization, whose associates were known to drive loads of illegal aliens into and within the United States in a dangerous manner by failing to yield and driving in the opposite lanes of traffic in an attempt to evade law enforcement.

Sentencing for Felipe Jaquez-Mercado is scheduled for July 17, 2009 at 9:00 a.m., and sentencing for Fernando Jaquez-Mercado is scheduled for May 15, 2009 at 9:00 a.m., both before Judge Sammartino.

DEFENDANTS

FELIPE JAQUEZ-MERCADO

Case No. 09CR0934-JLS

FERNANDO JAQUEZ-MERCADO

Case No. 09CR1626-JLS

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g) (Alien in Possession of Firearm)

Maximum Penalties: 10 years' incarceration, \$250,000 fine, and three years of supervised release.

AGENCIES

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

United States Border Patrol

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives