



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THREE SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON AFTER PURCHASING FIREARMS IN UNDERCOVER STING

TUCSON, Ariz. – Rafael Alcantar-Banda, 24, of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, was sentenced here on April 29, 2008 to 70 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Frank R. Zapata. Alcantar-Banda pleaded guilty on August 15, 2007 to two counts of Possession of Unregistered Firearms (Machine Guns) and one count of Possession of Unregistered Firearms (Destructive Devices - Fragmentation Grenades).

Alcantar-Banda had been originally charged with two co-defendants, Isaac Feerman-Rodriguez, 22, of Imperial Beach, Calif., and Noel Gomez-Araujo, 30, of Calexico, Calif., in a 28-count Indictment that charged the trio with possession of 26 fully-automatic machine guns, three fragmentation grenades and a 40 mm grenade launcher. The defendants were arrested in Tucson as part of a March 2006 undercover sting operation. According to evidence introduced at the sentencing hearings, the defendants came to Tucson to purchase these and other weapons on behalf of a major drug trafficking cartel. They paid undercover law enforcement agents \$194,000 for the weapons and were arrested after they attempted to take possession of them.

Feerman-Rodriguez and Gomez-Araujo both entered guilty pleas to one count of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm (Machine Gun), one count of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm (Destructive Device - Three Fragmentation Grenades) and one count of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm (Destructive Device - Grenade Launcher).

Judge Zapata previously sentenced Feerman-Rodriguez to 87 months in federal prison on April 21, 2008 and sentenced Gomez-Araujo to 87 months in federal prison on April 23, 2008.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the Tucson Police Department, Special Investigations Division. The prosecution was handled by Albert Kleiner, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-0695-TUC-FRZ
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-101(Feerman-Rodriguez)

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