



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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MEXICAN NATIONAL SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR IMPORTING COCAINE INTO THE U.S.

TUCSON, Ariz. - Martha Suarez-Leon, 48, a Mexican national, was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison yesterday by U.S. District Court Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson. Suarez-Leon was found guilty of Possession With Intent to Distribute Cocaine and Importation of Cocaine by a federal jury in May 2008.

The evidence during the trial showed that on September 20, 2007, Suarez-Leon possessed 26 packages of cocaine and brought the packages from Mexico into the United States. Suarez-Leon was stopped at the Port of Entry in Nogales, Ariz., where a search of her vehicle revealed the packages of cocaine concealed both beneath and behind the back seat. Lab tests confirmed that the substance was cocaine with 81.8% purity and a total unpackaged weight of 25.81 kilograms.

At trial, Suarez-Leon denied knowledge of the cocaine in her vehicle, and claimed that just prior to the offense, her vehicle had broken down on the side and she had taken it to a mechanic. The government presented evidence to refute this claim and showed that Suarez-Leon was aware of the drugs and intended to bring them into the U.S.

The investigation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The prosecution was handled by Angela Woolridge, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-1808-TUC-CKJ
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-274(Suarez-Leon)

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