



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales
District of New Mexico

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Albuquerque

Elizabeth Martinez
Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney
Public Affairs Officer
elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov
505.224.1469

Las Cruces

Terri Abernathy
Senior Litigation Counsel
terri.abemathy@usdoj.gov
575.522.2338 ext. 233

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**FEDERAL INDICTMENT CHARGES FIFTEEN WITH
METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning, the U.S. District Court unsealed a 23-count federal indictment charging 15 alleged members of a drug trafficking organization that supplied distribution quantities of methamphetamine to drug dealers in the Albuquerque area. The indictment was announced by U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales and Joseph M. Arabit, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA's El Paso Division.

The indictment, which was filed under seal by a federal grand jury on February 28, 2012, is the result of a nine-month investigation by the DEA. During the course of the nine-month investigation, law enforcement officer seized more than 13 pounds of methamphetamine, with a wholesale value of approximately \$208,000 and a retail value of approximately \$585,000, from the defendants charged in the indictment. They also seized \$105,000 in currency and other assets and five firearms.

"This investigation has dismantled what we believe was one of the larger and more lucrative methamphetamine distribution organizations operating in the Albuquerque area." said U.S. Attorney Gonzales. "Methamphetamine is an absolutely devastating drug that destroys lives, families and entire communities. We have to do everything possible to keep people from trying methamphetamine in the first place because of its highly addictive nature – too often it only takes one try before people begin a long very destructive path with no easy way out. I commend my law enforcement partners for their unwavering resolve to do battle every day

against the blight of methamphetamine that afflicts so many in our communities.”

“Methamphetamine exacts a terrible toll on its abusers and the overall quality of life in communities where its illegal distribution takes hold,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Arabit. “These arrests and seizures are expected to have an immediate positive impact by disrupting the distribution network of an organization responsible for trafficking large quantities of methamphetamine in the Albuquerque area. We will continue to work with our federal, state and local partners to pursue those who threaten public health and safety in our communities by dealing dangerous drugs, including methamphetamine.”

Four of the 15 defendants charged in the indictment were arrested by the DEA during the course of the investigation. The DEA arrested **Damacio Moya**, 37, on January 19, 2012, and seized more than two pounds of methamphetamine that was in his possession. **Cesar Carrasco**, 25, was arrested on February 10, 2012, after the DEA executed a search warrant at his residence and seized more than 11 pounds of methamphetamine. **Marco A. Jimenez**, 33, and **Javier Vidaca**, 25, also were arrested on February 10, 2012, based on a criminal complaint alleging that they were the source of supply for two pounds of methamphetamine seized from a co-conspirator on January 18, 2012. The four men, all residents of Albuquerque, are detained pending trial.

During an arrest operation yesterday, law enforcement officers arrested the following six defendants: **Octavio Baca-Rodriguez**, 27, **Henry Simental**, 37, **Andres Sabado**, 38, **Frank Sosa**, 40, **Jaime Pacheco**, 36, and **Michael McAllister**, 30. All of these defendants are residents of Albuquerque, except for Henry Simental, who is a resident of Los Lunas, N.M. These six defendants made their initial appearances in federal court in Albuquerque this morning.

Martin Ivan Alvarado, 23, of Albuquerque, currently is in state custody; he will be transferred into federal custody to face the charges in the indictment. **Raul Simental**, 33, of Albuquerque, will be summoned to appear for arraignment on the indictment on a date yet to be scheduled.

Three defendants, **Jose Vidaca**, 47, and **Omar Cota**, 27, both of Albuquerque, and **Maria Angel Alvarez**, 50, of Los Lunas, have yet to be arrested, and are considered fugitives.

The indictment charges all 15 defendants with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and includes eight separate methamphetamine charges against certain of the defendants. It also charges Jimenez, Carrasco and Raul Simental with maintaining premises for the distribution of methamphetamine, and all 15 defendants with using telephones to facilitate the commission of drug trafficking crimes (phone counts).

The maximum penalty for a conviction on Count 1, the conspiracy charge, or any of the methamphetamine distribution offenses charged in Counts 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7, is a mandatory minimum ten years of imprisonment and a maximum of life imprisonment and a \$10 million fine. The maximum penalty for a conviction on the methamphetamine distribution offenses charged in Counts 4 and 8 is a mandatory minimum five years of imprisonment and a maximum of 40 years of imprisonment and a \$5 million fine. The maximum penalty for a conviction for maintaining premises for the distribution of controlled substances is ten years of imprisonment

and a \$500,000 fine. The maximum penalty for a conviction on each of the phone counts charged in Counts 12 through 23 is four years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

The case was investigated by the DEA's Albuquerque office with assistance from the Albuquerque Police Department, the New Mexico State Police, the New Mexico Department of Public Safety Motor Transportation Division and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Elaine Y. Ramirez. It has been designated as part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program, a nationwide Department of Justice program that combines the resources and unique expertise of federal agencies, along with their local counterparts, in a coordinated effort to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking organizations.

Charges in indictments are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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