

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center

Treasury Targets Corporate Network of Sinaloa Cartel Drug Lord "El Azul"

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today announced the designation of nine entities and 10 individuals linked to Juan Jose Esparragoza Moreno (a.k.a. El Azul), a leader of Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel. El Azul has used proceeds from his involvement in the narcotics trade to build a large network of businesses including a housing development, a shopping mall, and an industrial park. These businesses are operated by members of his network including his family. Today's action, taken pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act), prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these entities and individuals, and also freezes any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

"While other Mexican narcotics traffickers have garnered and in some cases sought more attention, Esparragoza Moreno has purposely kept a low profile hoping to avoid scrutiny while increasing his influence and ill-gotten gains," said Treasury's OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "Today's action shines the spotlight on this godfather of Mexican narcotics. His entire corporate network that was created with illicit drug proceeds is in our sights."

The President identified Esparragoza Moreno and the Sinaloa Cartel as significant foreign narcotics traffickers pursuant to the Kingpin Act in 2003 and 2009, respectively. Esparragoza Moreno was indicted on drug trafficking charges in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas in 2003. He is wanted in both the U.S. and Mexico – the U.S. State Department Narcotics Rewards Program is offering a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to Esparragoza Moreno's arrest and/or conviction while Mexican authorities are offering 30 million pesos for information leading to his capture. Esparragoza Moreno has been active in drug trafficking since the 1970s.

Today's action targets 10 individuals, including six family members of Esparragoza Moreno. Maria Guadalupe Gastelum Payan, one of Esparragoza Moreno's wives, owns property in Tlajomulco de Zuniga, a town near Guadalajara, on behalf of Esparragoza Moreno. Gastelum Payan and her four children with Esparragoza Moreno own and operate the companies *Grupo Cinjab, S.A. de C.V.* and *Grupo Impergoza, S.A. de C.V.* in order to manage the aforementioned property, where they developed a residential community named *Provenza Residencial* and a shopping mall named *Provenza Center*. In addition, *Grupo Impergoza, S.A. de C.V.* also manages *La Tijera Parque Industrial*, an industrial park.

The four children of Esparragoza Moreno and Gastelum Payan who were designated today are: Brenda Guadalupe, Cristian Ivan, Juan Ignacio, and Nadia Patricia Esparragoza Gastelum. Juvencio Ignacio Gonzalez Parada, who plays a key role in *Grupo Cinjab, S.A. de C.V.* and *Grupo Impergoza, S.A. de C.V.*, was also designated today. The final Esparragoza Moreno family member designated today is Ofelia Monzon Araujo, also a wife of Esparragoza Moreno. She and three other individuals designated today – Elvira Araujo Monzon, Ulises Guzman Ochoa, and Martin Humberto Ponce Felix – own and/or control the following seven gas station companies located in Culiacan, Sinaloa on behalf of Esparragoza Moreno: *Buenos Aires Servicios, S.A. de C.V.*, *Estaciones de Servicios Canarias, S.A. de C.V.*, *Gasodiesel y Servicios Ancona, S.A. de C.V.*, *Gasolinera Alamos Country, S.A. de C.V.*, *Gasolinera y Servicios Villabonita, S.A. de C.V.*, *Petrobarrancos, S.A. de C.V.*, and *Servicios Chulavista, S.A. de C.V.*

Today's action would not have been possible without the support of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Internationally, OFAC has designated more than 1,100 businesses and individuals linked to 97 drug kingpins since June 2000. Penalties for violations of the Kingpin Act range from civil penalties of up to \$1.075 million per violation to more severe criminal penalties. Criminal penalties for corporate officers may include up to 30 years in prison and fines up to \$5 million. Criminal fines for corporations may reach \$10 million. Other individuals could face up to 10 years in prison and fines pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code for criminal violations of the Kingpin Act.

To view a chart of the Esparragoza Moreno network click [here](#) .

To view a chart of the Esparragoza Moreno companies click [here](#)

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