



## Press Release For Immediate Release

### **U.S. Leaders Sentenced For Conspiracy That Supplied Weapons to Sinaloa Cartel**

Mexico City, August 10, 2010 – The last defendant and leader of a firearms trafficking conspiracy that supplied over 100 assault rifles and other weapons to the Sinaloa drug cartel was sentenced this morning by U.S. District Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson in Tucson federal court. Alejandro Medrano, 23-year old U.S. citizen, of Mesa, Ariz., was sentenced to 46 months in prison for his leadership role in the conspiracy involving 10 defendants who “straw purchased” firearms from gun dealers in Phoenix and Tucson for the purpose of supplying the firearms to a member of the Sinaloa drug cartel known as “Rambo.”

Another leader of the conspiracy, Hernan Ramos, 22, also a U.S. citizen of Mesa, Ariz., was sentenced on July 6th to 50 months in prison. Most of the remaining defendants in the conspiracy received prison terms ranging from 14 to 30 months.

U.S. Ambassador Carlos Pascual remarked: “We are pleased to see our bilateral cooperation and use of state-of-the-art technology has shut down the activities of this criminal group that had been collaborating with one of the most notorious drug trafficking organizations in Mexico.”

The indictment alleged that from February 2008 through November 2008, the 10 defendants falsely represented that they were the actual purchasers of about 112 firearms from federally licensed firearms dealers in the Phoenix and Tucson area, and transported the firearms into Mexico to sell to a member of the Sinaloa drug cartel, Ruben Javier Elenes Ruiz, also known as “Rambo.”

“This case shows how illegal firearms purchases by straw buyers in Phoenix and Tucson are fueling the drug cartel war,” said U.S. Attorney Dennis K. Burke. “We are working aggressively with the ATF and other federal agencies to stop this southbound flow of arms that are spilling blood in Mexico’s drug war.”

Subsequent to indictment, the ATF investigation established that the defendants purchased approximately 117 firearms. The firearms were predominately assault-style rifles, including a .50 caliber rifle, and handguns known to be weapons of choice by the Mexican drug cartels. Fifteen of the firearms have been recovered in Mexico. Nine of the firearms were recovered together in Navojoa, Sonora, Mexico on February 24, 2010 in a seizure totaling seventy-three firearms, and 70,000 rounds of ammunition.

The fifteen guns were eTraced pertaining to this investigation, allowing ATF agents in Arizona to identify this trafficking group. ATF’s eTrace is a secure Internet-based

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firearms tracing system that is operated by the NTC, the nation's only crime gun tracing facility. eTrace allows law enforcement agencies to submit and monitor electronic firearms trace requests, retrieve completed trace results and query firearms trace-related data. NTC provides critical information that helps federal, state, local and international law enforcement agencies solve firearms crimes, detect firearms traffickers, and track the domestic and international trafficking of crime guns.

"This investigation is further proof of the relentless efforts by Mexican drug cartels to illegally acquire large quantities of firearms in the U.S. for use in the ongoing Mexican drug war," said Bill Newell, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF Phoenix Field Division. "This investigation is also further proof that the 'straw purchase' of firearms continues to be a significant problem. Those individuals that knowingly falsify ATF firearms forms to supply Mexican drug cartels with firearms have as much blood on their hands as the criminals that use them."

A conviction for Conspiracy and False Statement in Acquisition of Firearms carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine or both.

The investigation was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. The prosecution was handled the United States Attorney's Office, District of Arizona, Tucson.

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