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Treasury Sanctions Guatemalan Drug Trafficking Organizations Supporting Mexican Narco-Terrorist Cartels

November 13, 2026

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the **Los Mendoza Drug Trafficking Organization** (DTO) and the **Los Huistas DTO** for supporting Mexico's largest narco-terrorist groups, the Sinaloa Cartel and Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG), which the Trump Administration has designated as both Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) last year. Based in Guatemala, Los Mendoza DTO and Los Huistas DTO control strategic trafficking corridors along the borders with Honduras and Mexico, making them indispensable logistics partners for the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG.

"Today's action exposes the ties between politically influential Guatemalan criminal organizations and Mexican foreign terrorist organizations that facilitate the flow of deadly narcotics into the United States," said **Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent**. "Under President Trump's America First agenda, the Treasury Department will continue to target the criminal networks that enable violent organizations like the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG to traffic drugs across our borders and threaten the safety of the American people."

The Los Mendoza DTO and Los Huistas DTO facilitate the receipt, storage, protection, and cross-border movement of narcotics destined for the United States and other international markets. Through longstanding alliances spanning Central and South America, the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG have expanded their criminal operations, established sophisticated cross-border trafficking networks, and consolidated control over critical segments of the illicit drug supply chain. By targeting these key facilitators, OFAC is disrupting critical nodes in the supply chains that enable the trafficking of fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, and other illicit drugs throughout the region.

The action was taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14059, which targets the international proliferation of illicit drugs and their means of production, and pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended by E.O. 13886 (collectively, "E.O.13224, as amended"), which targets terrorists and their supporters.

This action was done in coordination with the Department of State who is taking action against narcoterrorists destabilizing the Western Hemisphere. In a concurrent action, the Department of State is also designating Los Lorenzanas as both an FTO pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and as an SDGT pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended.

SINALOA CARTEL AND CJNG: LEVERAGING GUATEMALAN ALLIANCES TO FACILITATE DRUG TRAFFICKING

Today, OFAC is sanctioning Los Mendoza DTO pursuant to E.O. 14059 and pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for providing material support to the Sinaloa Cartel. Additionally, OFAC is sanctioning Los Huistas DTO pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for providing material support to the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG. In Guatemala, Los Mendoza DTO and Los Huistas DTO play important roles in facilitating narco-trafficking activities by controlling strategic trafficking corridors along the country's borders with Honduras and Mexico. The Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG collaborate with local criminal groups like Los Mendoza DTO and Los Huistas DTO to manage key logistical operations, including the receipt, storage, and cross-border transportation of narcotics, in order to move narcotics into Mexico for distribution in the United States and other international markets.

The Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG are the most powerful cartels in Mexico and responsible for a significant portion of deadly drugs trafficked into the United States. In addition to trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and other illicit drugs into the United States, these cartels have engaged in widespread violence and other criminal endeavors, such as fuel theft and timeshare fraud. On February 20, 2025, the Department of State designated both the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG as FTOs and SDGTs. The Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG were each also identified by the United States as significant foreign narcotics traffickers on April 15, 2009 and on April 8, 2015, respectively, pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. On December 15, 2021, OFAC also designated the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG pursuant to E.O. 14059.

LOS MENDOZA AND LOS HUISTAS DTOS – KEY LOGISTICS PARTNERS

Founded in the 1980s, Los Mendoza DTO is one of Guatemala's oldest and most powerful criminal organizations. The family-based organization operates as a key transportation and logistics intermediary for the Sinaloa Cartel, facilitating drug trafficking operations across Guatemala and Honduras. Los Mendoza DTO supports the Sinaloa Cartel's trafficking network by facilitating access to border crossings, clandestine airstrips, storage facilities, and local protection networks in the

Guatemalan departments of San Marcos, Huehuetenango, and Peten. Beyond narcotics trafficking, Los Mendoza DTO is involved in contract killings and money laundering, and has amassed significant economic interests through land dispossession, cattle ranching, agricultural businesses, and real estate investments across Peten, Izabal, and Guatemala's border region with Mexico.

Active since the 1990s, Los Huistas DTO is one of Guatemala's most powerful and longstanding criminal organizations. Los Huistas DTO serves as a critical link in the cocaine trafficking supply chain from South America through Mexico and ultimately into the United States. On March 18, 2022, OFAC designated Los Huistas DTO pursuant to E.O. 14059. Los Huistas DTO maintains operational ties with both the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG, providing logistical support and protection for narcotics shipments. Los Huistas DTO's longstanding ties to local businessmen, law enforcement officials, and politicians have enabled it to dominate the underworld in parts of northwestern Guatemala. Through these relationships, Los Huistas DTO has cultivated political influence and institutional access which have facilitated its criminal operations and helped to shield the organization from the purview of law enforcement.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated persons described above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons.

Violations of U.S. sanctions may result in the imposition of civil or criminal penalties on U.S. and foreign persons. OFAC may impose civil penalties for sanctions violations on a strict liability basis. OFAC's Economic Sanctions Enforcement Guidelines provide more information regarding OFAC's enforcement of U.S. economic sanctions. In addition, financial institutions and other persons may risk exposure to sanctions for engaging in certain transactions or activities involving designated or otherwise blocked persons. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any designated or blocked person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person. Non-U.S. persons are also prohibited from causing or conspiring to cause U.S. persons to wittingly or unwittingly violate U.S. sanctions, as well as engaging in conduct that evades U.S. sanctions. Individuals located

in the United States or abroad who provide information about sanctions violations to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's (FinCEN's) whistleblower incentive program may be eligible for awards if the information they provide leads to a successful enforcement action that results in monetary penalties exceeding $1,000,000.

Furthermore, engaging in certain transactions involving the persons designated today may risk the imposition of secondary sanctions on participating foreign financial institutions. OFAC can prohibit or impose strict conditions on opening or maintaining, in the United States, a correspondent account or a payable-through account of a foreign financial institution that knowingly conducts or facilitates any significant transaction on behalf of a person who is designated pursuant to the relevant authority.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List), but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, or to submit a request, please refer to OFAC's guidance on Filing a Petition for Removal from an OFAC List.

Click here for more information on the entities designated today.

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