

Subject Sinaloa Cartel Leader Charged in Massive Drug Trafficking Scheme
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The United States Department of Justice

Jason A. Reding Quiñones
United States Attorney
Southern District of Florida

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WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/
USAO-SDFL
CONTACT: Public Affairs
Unit
EMAIL:
USAFLS.News@usdoj.gov

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Sinaloa Cartel Leader Charged in Massive Drug Trafficking Scheme

MIAMI – An alleged leader of the Sinaloa Cartel made his initial appearance in federal court today to face charges for leading a large-scale drug trafficking operation responsible for moving fentanyl and other narcotics into the United States.

According to court records, Fidel Felix-Ochoa, 53, of Mexico, was one of the primary leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel responsible for directing, managing, and overseeing the organization's drug trafficking and money laundering activities. Felix-Ochoa allegedly coordinated the smuggling of hundreds of kilograms of fentanyl and cocaine into the United States using couriers who transported narcotics by vehicle and through the U.S. mail. The Sinaloa Cartel is a transnational criminal group based in Mexico. On Feb. 20, 2025, the Sinaloa Cartel was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

“The charges target an alleged senior leader of the Sinaloa Cartel who is accused of directing the flow of massive quantities of fentanyl and other deadly narcotics into the United States,” said U.S. Attorney Jason A. Reding Quiñones for the Southern District of Florida. “While these are allegations that must be proven in court, this case reflects our Office’s

unwavering commitment to dismantling transnational criminal organizations and protecting American communities from the devastating consequences of drug trafficking. No cartel leader is beyond the reach of the rule of law.”

Once the narcotics entered the United States, Felix-Ochoa allegedly directed co-conspirators to store the drugs at multiple stash houses before distributing them to drug dealers and customers throughout the country, including Florida, Arizona, California, Texas, and Massachusetts.

During the investigation into Felix-Ochoa and his co-conspirators, law enforcement seized approximately 73,000 fentanyl pills, 21 kilograms of pure fentanyl, 243 pounds of crystal methamphetamine, two kilograms of cocaine, and 24 firearms.

Felix-Ochoa was among 37 Mexican nationals wanted for serious crimes in the United States [transferred](#) into U.S. custody on Jan. 20. The Justice Department Criminal Division’s Office of International Affairs coordinated the transfers.

Prior to Felix-Ochoa’s arrest, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida successfully apprehended and prosecuted seven members of his organization in a related case, under case number 23-cr-60111.

Felix-Ochoa is charged with conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance. If convicted, Felix-Ochoa faces a maximum penalty of life in prison.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Miami Field Office is investigating the case with assistance from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Miami, Broward Sheriff’s Office, ATF Los Angeles Field Division, U.S. Marshals Service, and U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ajay Alexander for the Southern District of Florida is prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Joshua Paster for the Southern District of Florida is handling asset forfeiture.

This prosecution is part of the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF) initiative established by Executive Order 14159, Protecting the American People Against Invasion. The HSTF is a whole-of-government partnership dedicated to eliminating criminal cartels, foreign gangs, transnational criminal organizations, and human smuggling and trafficking rings operating in the United States and abroad. Through historic interagency collaboration, the HSTF directs the full might of United States law enforcement towards identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the full spectrum of crimes committed by these organizations, which have long fueled violence and

instability within our borders. In performing this work, the HSTF places special emphasis on investigating and prosecuting those engaged in child trafficking or other crimes involving children. The HSTF further utilizes all available tools to prosecute and remove the most violent criminal aliens from the United States. HSTF Miami comprises agents and officers from ATF, DEA, HSI, BSO, USMS, and USPIA with the prosecution being led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.



Image Credit: U.S. v. Fidel Felix-Ochoa, Case #23-cr-60150

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