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United States Attorney's Office  
District of Oregon

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### **Two Portland Area Drug Traffickers Sentenced to Federal Prison**

PORTLAND, Ore.—On May 25, 2023, two Portland area drug traffickers were sentenced to more than ten years in federal prison for their roles in a Mexican drug trafficking organization responsible for distributing fentanyl, heroin, and methamphetamine in and around Portland and elsewhere.

Rodrigo Diaz-Lopez, 53, of Gresham, Oregon, and Jonathan Avila-Suarez, 31, of Portland, were sentenced to 135 and 120 months in federal prison, respectively. Both men must also complete five-year terms of supervised release following the completion of their prison sentences.

According to court documents, Diaz-Lopez and Avila-Suarez were part of a drug trafficking organization (DTO) led by two brothers based in Nayarit, Mexico. Diaz-Lopez, who has three prior felony drug trafficking convictions and has been repeatedly removed from the United States following those convictions, served as a sub-distributor in the DTO responsible for receiving illegal narcotics from couriers and other distributors and brokering local sales. Avila-Suarez was a sub-distributor and stash house operator.

In early February 2021, as part of a long-term investigation into the DTO's operations, special agents from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) obtained information that Avila-Suarez had arranged for the delivery of 400 grams of heroin to a Portland hotel room. Agents observed the delivery and seized the heroin from Avila-Suarez's customer. The next day, agents executed a federal search warrant on Avila-Suarez's Portland apartment. They located and seized large quantities of heroin, methamphetamine, and fentanyl packaged for distribution and two firearms.

Around the same time, agents identified Diaz-Lopez and arranged for a controlled purchase of methamphetamine from him. On March 12, 2021, they executed a federal search warrant on Diaz-Lopez's Gresham residence and seized several kilograms each of methamphetamine, heroin, and counterfeit Oxycodone pills containing fentanyl. Agents also located and seized \$30,000 in cash, an assault rifle, and a handgun.

On February 21, 2021, Avila-Suarez was charged by criminal complaint with possessing with intent to distribute controlled substances, using communications facilities in the commission of drug trafficking offenses, and maintaining drug involved premises. On March 15, 2021, Diaz-Lopez was charged by criminal complaint with possessing with intent to distribute controlled substances. Both men were later indicted on related charges.

On January 25, 2023, Avila-Suarez pleaded guilty to possessing with intent to distribute methamphetamine. One month later, on February 21, 2023, Diaz-Lopez pleaded guilty to possessing with intent to distribute heroin.

These cases were investigated by DEA. They were prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon.

These prosecutions were the result of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that threaten the U.S. by using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach that leverages the strengths of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies against criminal networks.

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