



Department of Justice

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District of Oregon

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PROLIFIC SOUTHERN OREGON DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO 11 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

MEDFORD, Ore.—The leader of a southern Oregon drug trafficking organization responsible for distributing large quantities of methamphetamine and heroin in and around Klamath Falls, Oregon was sentenced to federal prison today, announced Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

Rogelio Gomez-Arias, 24, of Klamath Falls, was sentenced to 135 months in federal prison and five years' supervised release.

According to court documents, in May 2018, southern Oregon law enforcement began investigating Gomez-Arias' trafficking organization. Investigators learned that an individual in Mexico supplied the organization with methamphetamine in exchange for cash and firearms, and instructed it to transport narcotics to other west coast cities and beyond.

In August 2019, investigators conducted three controlled buys with Gomez-Arias, purchasing a total of three pounds of methamphetamine. During these purchases, Gomez-Arias directed other members of his organization and openly explained his history of drug dealing. He explained in detail how he started selling small quantities of drugs and then moved up to ounces and, later, pounds. He bragged of making \$500,000 in a single week and transporting drugs to other cities, including Seattle and New York. This information was corroborated when a co-conspirator was stopped on his way to New York with more than 700 grams of fentanyl.

On October 9, 2019, a coordinated, multi-agency law enforcement operation was conducted to dismantle Gomez-Arias' drug trafficking organization. Four federal search warrants were executed in Klamath Falls and Dorris, California. Investigators seized more than 37 pounds of methamphetamine, 440 grams of heroin, 14 firearms, and nearly \$50,000 in cash and arrested five co-conspirators, including Gomez-Arias.

On October 2, 2019, a federal grand jury in Medford returned a six-count indictment charging Gomez-Arias and three co-conspirators with conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, and distribution of a controlled substance. A fourth co-conspirator was charged by criminal complaint.

On July 30, 2020, Gomez-Arias pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

Three of Gomez-Arias' co-conspirators—Alexis Chavez-Franco, 23; Domingo Matias-Hernandez, 36; and Juan Rodriguez-Ramirez, 62—remain in custody pending trial. A fourth co-conspirator, Irving Beas Ceballos, 35, is on pre-trial release.

During sentencing, U.S. District Court Judge Michael J. McShane ordered Gomez-Arias to forfeit the U.S. currency seized and the firearms used to facilitate his crimes.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Basin Interagency Narcotics Enforcement Team (BINET) and the Siskiyou Unified Major Investigation Team (SUMIT). It was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon.

This case was brought as part of the Justice Department's Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program, the centerpiece of the department's strategy for reducing the availability of drugs in the U.S. OCDETF was established in 1982 to mount a comprehensive attack on drug trafficking by disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. Today, OCDETF combines the resources and expertise of its member federal agencies in coordination with state and local law enforcement.

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