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SEARCH THE SITE

- [Home](#)
- [About Us](#)
 - [The Attorney General](#)
 - [DOJ Agencies](#)
 - [Budget & Performance](#)
 - [Strategic Plans](#)
- [Business & Grants](#)
 - [Business Opportunities](#)
 - [Grants](#)
- [Resources](#)
 - [Forms](#)
 - [Publications](#)
 - [Case Highlights](#)
 - [A-Z Index](#)
- [Briefing Room](#)
 - [Justice News](#)
 - [The Justice Blog](#)
 - [Videos](#)
 - [Photo Library](#)
- [Careers](#)
 - [Student Opportunities](#)
 - [Internships](#)
- [Contacts](#)

[/opa/pr/2010/October/index.html](#)

[Home](#) » [Briefing Room](#) » [Justice News](#)

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Eighty-Nine Law Enforcement Officers and 44 Others Indicted for Drug Trafficking Crimes in Puerto Rico

WASHINGTON – Eighty-nine law enforcement officers and 44 others in Puerto Rico have been charged in 26 indictments unsealed today and returned by a grand jury in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during the month of September 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder and U.S. Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez of the District of Puerto Rico announced today.

The defendants face charges ranging from conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine, attempt to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine, and use of a firearm during the commission of a drug trafficking offense. The offenses charged cover a period from in or about July 26, 2008 until Sept. 21, 2010.

The arrests today are the result of Operation Guard Shack, the largest police corruption investigation in the history of the FBI. Close to 750 FBI agents were flown in to Puerto Rico from across the country to assist in the arrests early this morning. Currently 129 individuals are in custody and four subjects remain at-large.

"The Justice Department's commitment to rooting out and eradicating alleged corruption in our law enforcement ranks has never been stronger," said Attorney General Eric Holder. "This department has one message for anyone willing to abuse the public trust for personal gain: you will be caught, you will be stopped and you will be punished."

The indictments unsealed today are the result of 125 undercover drug transactions conducted by the FBI in several locations in Puerto Rico, from July 2008 until September 2010. The defendants' participation in the drug transactions consisted of providing armed protection to a drug dealer during the sale of multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine. In exchange for their security services during the undercover drug transactions, the defendants, a majority of whom are law enforcement officers, received payments ranging from \$500 to \$4,500 per transaction.

The law enforcement officers indicted today are from the following agencies: 60 defendants from the Puerto Rico Police Department (PRPD); 16 defendants from various municipal police departments; and 12 officers from the Puerto Rico Corrections Department. The remaining defendants include: three Puerto Rico National Guard soldiers; two U.S. Army officers; eight former law enforcement officers ; one administrative examiner in child support matters; one employee from the Social Security Administration; and 30 civilians.

"These indictments demonstrate the commitment of the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Puerto Rico to eradicate corruption in our law enforcement ranks. We cannot help but be appalled at the criminal conduct charged today against those who have sworn to serve and protect the citizens of Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico deserve and expect better, and today we send a clear message. We will continue working side by side with the many honest members of Puerto Rico's law enforcement agencies in our fight against drug trafficking, violent crime and corruption in the island," said U.S. Attorney Rodríguez-Vélez.

"Public corruption does not just strike at the heart of good government. It also jeopardizes the security of our communities and our nation," said FBI Executive Assistant Director Shawn Henry, Criminal, Cyber, Response and Services Branch. "It erodes public confidence and undermines the strength of our democracy. The FBI is fully committed to pursuing allegations of public corruption and we will work closely with the Department of Justice to bring charges when necessary."

The 61 indicted defendants from the Puerto Rico Police Department are: Omar Pérez Prado; Lt. Ángel Torres Figueroa; Carlos Fontanez Mercado, aka

"Machazo;" Yacira Vélez Milian; Heriberto Cruz Vargas aka "Yopi;" Giovanni Cubertier Morales; Armando Valle Vicenty; Melvin Acevedo Hernández; Jeff Marrero Malpica; José Fuentes-Fuentes; Nelson Álvarez Mendoza; Obed Acevedo Ranero; Joel Hernández Hernández; David González Pérez; Israel Rullan Santiago; Eusebio Hernández Nieves; Xavier Álvarez Pérez; Ángel Acevedo Pérez, Ángel Rivera Ortiz, aka "Kento;" Samuel Acevedo Rivera; Pedro A. Morales Cintrón; Michael Forestier Figueroa; Juan Cruz Ramos, aka "Tito K9;" Jorge Rosado García; José R. Sánchez Quiñones; Rafael Figueroa Quiñones; Mayra Jiménez Pacheco; Juan D. Santiago Rosado; Rolando Nieves Valentin; Brenda Acosta Andújar; Javier A. Díaz Castro; Arnold E. Benítez Rivera; Rafael Rodríguez Valentin; Ramón Benítez Falcón; Carlos M. Méndez Pérez; Juan Hernández Vega; Daviel Salinas Acevedo; Pedro Ayala Rivera; Yamil M. Navedo Ramírez; Ivan Santiago-Cruz; Daniel E. Ocasio Figueroa; Rafael Bautista Santiago; Isaías Reyes Arroyo; Sgt. Luis E. Pérez Ortiz; Hector Hernández Aguilar; Karla M. Colón Bracero; Jim Santana Ramírez; Jayson Acevedo; José L. Salva Negrón; Milton L. Martínez Matos; Luis A. González Torres; Miguel Santiago Cordero; Alberto De La Rosa Reyes; José B. Vargas Torres; Hector López Terrón; Johanna Caraballo López; Silverio Vera Monroy; Juan Jusino Ramos; Raúl Vega Sosa; Jonathan Ortiz Muñiz; and Hector Olivero Alicea. Ricardo Vázquez (U.S. Army Recruiter); Rafael Ureña Rivera, aka "Indio (former PRPD);" and William Rivera García (former municipal officer).

The 16 indicted defendants who are municipal police officers are: Andy Alejandrino Sánchez; Arcadio Hernández-Soto; Raquel Delgado Marrero; Ángel L. Rivera Claudio; Joel Omar Aldarondo-Montalvo; Neftali Valentin-Fred; José O. Maldonado García; Luis Joel Avilés Rullan; Mark Anthony Ortiz; Luis Román Herrera; Gabriel Lozada Torres; Onel Saavedra González; Rose M. Serrano Vargas; Wilfredo González Lagares; Francisco J. Riesta Natal; and Jose Pérez Pérez.

The 12 indicted defendants who are officers in the Puerto Rico Corrections Department are: Christian Díaz Maldonado; Olvin García Huertas; José L. Román Méndez; Ruben Maldonado Torres; Radamés Cortez Ozoa; Carlos M. Rosado López; Omar Torres Ruperto; Carlos M. Linares Vega; Bernis González Miranda; José R. Bermúdez Quiñones; Joel Díaz Nieves; and Bernardo Cruz Trujillo.

The remaining 44 defendants are: Carlos Figueroa Cruz; Anthony Cruz; Miguel Sánchez Román (U.S. Army, former San Juan Municipal); Rodolfo E. Torres Negrón; Melquiades Álvarez Mendoza; Juan Carlos González Ortiz; Nelmic De La Cruz Raposo; Jesús LNU; Axel González Terron; Juan Cruz Tapia (Social Security Office); Edgar Rafael Rivera De Jesús (retired PRPD); Idanis García Morales (child support examiner); Christian Sotomayor Filomeno; Omar Cajigas; Abimael Hernández Rivera; Pedro González-Cruz; Rubin A. Maisonet De Jesús; Wayne Cedeño Amador; Josué Ramírez González; Oscar E. Ramos Rodríguez; Antonio L. Román Reyes; Yancy Toro Espiet; Alex O. Cordero Cortez, aka "Omar De La Cruz;" Luis Vélez-Concepción; Billy Hernández; Edward Quiñones (former PRPD); Christian A. Núñez-Reverón, aka "Kelvin Nuñez," Roberto Molina (retired PRPD); Francisco Manzano López (former PRPD); Abraham Sánchez (National Guard); Hector Hernández-Aldarondo; Rafael E. Pérez Rivera; Sgt. Abraham González Sánchez (National Guard); Wendell Rivera Ruperto, aka "Arsenio Rivera," (former PR Department of Corrections); David Maldonado (National Guard); Juan C. Ramos-Vargas, aka "Joseph Avilés;" Frederick Santos Ortiz, aka "Roberto Ortega;" Yoana Sierra Padilla (former PRPD); Julio Gómez-Lloréns; Ricardo Amaro-Santiago; Eliezer Pagán Medina; and Sgt.

If convicted the defendants are facing sentences ranging from 10 years, up to life in prison.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Courtney Coker and Jacqueline Novas. The case is being investigated by the FBI San Juan Field Office.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

Attorney General

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[Grants](#)

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[Publications](#)
[Case Highlights](#)
[A-Z Index](#)

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[The Justice Blog](#)
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