

PRESS RELEASE

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Eli Torres-Banos, 21, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to one year in prison for conspiring to possess cocaine with intent to distribute. Torres-Banos will be deported to Mexico after he completes his prison sentence.

Between May 2007 and June 2008, the defendant was involved in a conspiracy to possess and to distribute cocaine in Watertown. Three defendants, Efrain Pineda-Buenventura, Gerardo Pineda-Soria, and Juan Carlos Pineda-Pineda, are scheduled to be sentenced in April for their roles. Three other defendants remain fugitives.

Beginning in February 2008, the United States received authority from Chief Judge Crabb to conduct wiretaps on several of the telephones being used by Torres-Banos and others to conduct their drug operation. During the course of the investigation, officers also purchased cocaine directly from Torres-Banos and Angel Ayala-Pineda, who remains a fugitive.

On June 19, 2008, law enforcement officers executed 11 search warrants in the Western and Eastern Districts of Wisconsin, resulting in the arrest of Torres-Banos and

his co-defendants, the seizure of over \$100,000 in United States currency, several automobiles, and multiple kilograms of cocaine.

The charge against the defendant was the result of an investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration; Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigations; Dodge County Sheriff's Department; Jefferson County Drug Task Force; Fort Atkinson Police Department; Watertown Police Department; and Janesville Police Department. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul W. Connell.

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