



## ***Treasury Sanctions Financial Operatives Linked to Los Zetas***

### ***Action Targets Individuals Laundering Money for Trevino Morales***

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**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today designated two Mexican nationals, Jose Odilon Ramirez Perales and Ismael Lopez Guerrero, pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act) for their ties to Mexico’s violent Los Zetas drug trafficking organization. Ramirez Perales is a powerful financial operative responsible for controlling and laundering tens of millions of dollars in funds smuggled from the U.S. to Mexico for Los Zetas leaders Miguel Trevino Morales and Omar Trevino Morales. Lopez Guerrero collects illicit monies from Los Zetas operations in Nuevo Laredo, and he sends large quantities of smuggled cash to Ramirez Perales for safeguarding and processing in Coahuila, Mexico.

“The momentous arrest of Miguel Trevino Morales, who was captured last week, took place in the early morning hours with two of his closest advisors by his side, including a key accountant. This is another clear example of the central importance of financial operatives within the operational structure of drug cartels,” said Treasury’s Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Adam J. Szubin. “Treasury’s action today targets the activities of two other significant financial operatives for Los Zetas. We will continue to support our Mexican partners to target those laundering Los Zetas’ ill-gotten gains.”

Ramirez Perales is wanted in the Southern District of Texas for money laundering relating to drug trafficking. Ramirez Perales and his other co-defendants are subject to the forfeiture of approximately \$20 million in the Southern District of Texas. In October 2012, Mexican authorities captured Ramirez Perales, and they arrested Lopez Guerrero after a July 2012 gun battle. Lopez Guerrero, who uses the alias Gilberto Godina Guerrero, was alleged to possess ammunition, drugs, and currency at the time of his arrest. The arrests of these individuals and other high level Los Zetas members such as Miguel Trevino Morales, along with the death of former Zeta leader Heriberto Lazcano-Lazcano, has played a vital role in weakening of the organization.

Today’s action generally prohibits U.S. persons from engaging in any transactions with these individuals and freezes any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction.

The President identified Los Zetas as a significant foreign narcotics trafficker pursuant to the Kingpin Act in April 2009. On July 24, 2011, the President named Los Zetas as a significant Transnational Criminal Organization in the Annex to Executive Order 13581 (Blocking Property of Transnational Criminal Organizations). Additionally, OFAC designated Los Zetas leaders Miguel and Omar Trevino Morales on July 20, 2009 and March 24, 2010, respectively. Since 2009, OFAC has designated several dozen key plaza bosses, drug

traffickers, and money launderers operating on behalf of Los Zetas using Kingpin Act authorities.

Internationally, OFAC has designated more than 1,200 individuals and entities linked to 103 drug kingpins since June 2000. OFAC designations are part of an ongoing effort to apply financial measures against significant foreign narcotics traffickers and their organizations worldwide. Penalties for violations of the Kingpin Act range from civil penalties of up to \$1.075 million per violation to more severe criminal penalties. Criminal penalties for corporate officers may include up to 30 years in prison and fines up to \$5 million. Criminal fines for corporations may reach \$10 million. Other individuals face up to 10 years in prison and fines pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code for criminal violations of the Kingpin Act.