



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas

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## **LEADER OF CARTEL DEL NORESTE AND NEPHEW OF LOS ZETAS LEADERS Z-40 AND Z-42 RECEIVES TWO CONSECUTIVE LIFE SENTENCES PLUS 20 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON**

In Waco today, U.S. District Judge Alia Moses sentenced 38-year-old Juan Francisco “Kiko” Trevino Chavez, nephew of Los Zetas leaders Miguel Angel Trevino Morales (Z-40) and Oscar Omar Trevino Morales (Z-42), to two consecutive life imprisonment sentences plus 20 years in federal prison. In addition to the prison terms, Judge Moses ordered that Trevino pay a \$2 Million fine and a \$2 Million money judgment.

That announcement was made by U.S. Attorney John F. Bash; Special Agent in Charge Shane Folden, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), San Antonio Division; Special Agent in Charge Tamera Cantu, IRS—Criminal Investigation, Dallas Division; Special Agent in Charge Will Glaspy, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Houston Division; Special Agent in Charge Fred Milanowski, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), Houston Division; and, Special Agent in Charge Christopher Combs, FBI, San Antonio Division.

On July 24, 2018, a jury convicted the defendant on one count each of conspiracy to possess marijuana with intent to distribute, conspiracy to import marijuana, unlawful distribution of controlled substances (extra-territorial), conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute, conspiracy to import cocaine, conspiracy to possess firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking, and conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Evidence presented at trial revealed that from 2004 until September 2016, the defendant was a member of the Los Zetas, a transnational drug trafficking organization operating primarily in the Mexican corridors of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Ciudad Acuna and Piedras Negras, Coahuila. Evidence further revealed that Kiko Trevino worked with and conspired with the highest level operatives in the criminal organization, including his uncles, Z-40 and Z-42. Evidence also revealed that Kiko Trevino organized the source and distribution of large quantities of narcotics, laundered drug proceeds, and controlled cells of traffickers and a group of armed sicarios in the Nueva Laredo area. The trial evidence showed the defendant participated in the trafficking of more than 250,000 kilos of cocaine, hundreds of thousands of kilos of marijuana, and hundreds of firearms. The evidence further described the laundering of hundreds of millions of dollars in drug proceeds. Finally, trial testimony revealed that after his uncles' arrests, Los Zetas splintered into two groups and Kiko Trevino took over leadership of one of those two groups, the Cartel Del Noreste (CDN), and in this role, he controlled all of the drug and firearm trafficking, enforcement, and money laundering operations of CDN. Trevino continued in this leadership role until his arrest in 2016.

“Trevino-Chavez, also known as ‘Comandante Kiko,’ is a leader/organizer for a major Transnational Criminal Organization that is responsible for smuggling literally tons of drugs into South Texas. Homeland Security Investigations specializes in complex cross-border conspiracy investigations targeting violent and dangerous individuals who threaten or violate the national security of the United States,” stated HSI Special Agent in Charge Folden.

**Juan Francisco “Kiki” Trevino Chavez sentencing release**

**November 8, 2018**

**Page 2**

“As a result of the consistent and exceptional efforts of U.S. law enforcement working together with our international law enforcement partners, a very significant drug trafficker from Mexico has been brought to justice. The Kiko Trevino sentencing serves as an example that there are no borders when it comes to prosecuting international drug traffickers,” stated DEA Special Agent in Charge Glaspy.

“This investigation is a prime example of the fine work done when agencies come together to become a force multiplier,” stated ATF Special Agent in Charge Milanowski.

Kiko Trevino has remained in federal custody since his arrest in Baytown, TX, on September 28, 2016.

This federal prosecution resulted from multiple Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) operations and investigations, originating out of Waco, SA, DR, Eagle Pass and Dallas area metroplex, conducted by HSI, IRS-Criminal Investigations, DEA-High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Group, FBI, ATF, U.S. Marshals Service, Texas Rangers, Texas Department of Public Safety, Irving Police Department, Waco Police Department, Laredo Police Department, and Leon Valley Police Department. The U.S. Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection—Office of Enforcement Operations, and Natalia Police Department also provided support in this case.

The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking, weapons trafficking and money laundering operations, and those primarily responsible for the nation’s illegal drug supply.

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