

Treasury Sanctions Cartel-Linked Casinos and Key Associates on U.S.-Mexico Border

Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned six targets involved in a money laundering and cash smuggling enterprise operated by Cartel del Noreste (CDN), one of Mexico's most violent drug trafficking organizations. CDN is a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) that exerts significant influence along the U.S.-Mexico border near Laredo, Texas, the busiest land port of entry on the southern border. The three individuals designated today play central roles in advancing CDN's criminal dominance over the Nuevo Laredo plaza in Tamaulipas, Mexico, supporting the cartel's broader illicit operations, which include fentanyl trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering, and extortion. Today's action also targets two CDN-affiliated casinos, one of which is located just two miles from the U.S. border.

"As President Trump has made clear, Treasury will use all tools to protect our nation from violent cartels looking to reign terror on innocent Americans," said **Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent**. "Treasury will continue to target the diverse revenue streams that cartels rely on to sustain their operations, which include trafficking fentanyl and illegal aliens into the United States."

Cartel Casino Warning

The involvement of cartels and other organized crime in Mexican casinos is well documented. On November 13, 2025, Treasury, in coordination with partners in the Government of Mexico, targeted the Hysa Organized Crime Group and numerous Mexico-based gambling establishments involved in cartel-linked money laundering, including activity tied to the Sinaloa Cartel.

CARTEL DEL NORESTE'S CAMPAIGN OF TERROR ON THE BORDER

CDN is primarily based in the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Nuevo Leon. For decades, CDN has been involved in the trafficking of narcotics and other illicit drugs, including fentanyl, crystal methamphetamine, heroin, marijuana, and cocaine. CDN is involved in violent criminal activity on both sides of the border, including the kidnapping and killing of individuals that threaten their criminal enterprise on the southern border. With a stronghold in Nuevo Laredo, CDN uses its terror-fueled influence in the region to control drug trafficking and human smuggling routes, bribe politicians and journalists, and extort local businesses and shipments flowing to and from the United States at the busiest inland point of entry for trade in the United States.

THE HOUSE LOSES: DISMANTLING CDN CASINO VENTURES

Today, OFAC designated **Casino Centenario**, a Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas-based casino. Operated by the entity **Comercializadora y Arrendadora de Mexico, S.A. de C.V. (CAMSA)**, Casino Centenario is utilized by CDN as a stash house for fentanyl pills and cocaine, as well as a vehicle to launder illicit proceeds and integrate them into the legitimate financial system through its gaming operations. CDN also uses the backrooms of Casino

Centenario to torture and intimidate alleged enemies of the cartel. Many CDN members also frequent Casino Centenario.

U.S. Persons Beware

Located just two miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, **Casino Centenario** was known, prior to today's designation, to draw U.S. customers. Following today's action, U.S. persons are generally prohibited from conducting any transactions with **Casino Centenario**.

CAMSA also operates **Diamante Casino**, which has a location in Tampico, Tamaulipas and a gambling website with the same name (diamantecasino.com.mx). Diamante Casino is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14059, and pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for being owned, controlled, or directed by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, CAMSA.

DISRUPTING CARTEL DEL NORESTE BORDER OPERATIONS OFAC today designated **Eduardo Javier Islas Valdez (Islas)**, also known as "Crosty," who is in charge of CDN human smuggling operations in Nuevo Laredo. Islas oversees human smugglers, known as *pateros*, and grants permission to move the migrants, acting as a gatekeeper for human smuggling along the Rio Grande into Texas. Islas also ensures the continuity of cross-border activities that sustain the cartel's criminal enterprise by controlling cash stash houses in Nuevo Laredo. Islas is a close associate of CDN second-in-command Abdon Federico Rodriguez Garcia, who OFAC designated in August 2025.

EXPOSING PROMINENT CARTEL ENABLERS

CDN has many high-profile associates that conceal their criminality behind the appearance of their public-facing, legitimate, and otherwise seemingly honorable professions. Using their positions as cover, these individuals attempt to gain the public's trust, while working behind the scenes to strengthen CDN's control over Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, and the surrounding border region.

Juan Pablo Penilla Rodriguez (Penilla), a defense attorney, provides illegal services to CDN members beyond the scope of a normal attorney-client relationship. While representing Miguel Angel "Z-40" Trevino Morales, Penilla has assisted Miguel Trevino in Mexican prison—despite OFAC's sanctions against him—by serving as his intermediary to the current leadership of CDN and other criminal associates. This facilitation has enabled Miguel Trevino to maintain his leadership role in the cartel despite his incarceration. The criminal operations of Miguel Trevino, and CDN as a whole, rely directly on Penilla. Miguel Trevino is in U.S. custody.

Jesus Reymundo Ramos Vazquez (Ramos), better known as **Raymundo Ramos**, is a CDN associate that leads the CDN disinformation campaign against Mexican authorities while posing as a "human rights" activist. Under the guise of human rights activism, Ramos solely advocates for violent cartel members by filing false complaints against the Mexican military, paying individuals to attend protests, and protecting the reputations of fallen or arrested CDN members. On the CDN payroll, Ramos engages in these activities with the goal of boosting the public opinion of CDN and discrediting Mexican authorities' law enforcement initiatives against the cartel. Ramos has supported CDN in this capacity for over a decade.

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated or blocked persons described above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked.

Dated 14 April, 2026

