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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Arrests, Charges of Four Defendants in Interstate Cocaine Trafficking Operation

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the arrests of four defendants charged in connection with an interstate cocaine trafficking conspiracy that transported approximately 60 kilograms of cocaine from El Paso, Texas, into the Tampa Bay area.

“This operation dismantled a dangerous cartel pipeline flooding Florida communities with cocaine,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “Thanks to the outstanding work of the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, FDLE, and our Statewide Prosecutors, we have removed 60 kilograms of poison from our streets and are holding these traffickers fully accountable.”

On July 11, 2026, Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office detectives, working with Florida Department of Law Enforcement through the State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (SAFE) program, conducted surveillance on a Drug Trafficking Organization. Investigators identified a monthly supply pattern involving white Freightliner semi-trucks.

Two members were observed retrieving bags from the semi-trucks in Wesley Chapel and transporting them in a chase vehicle to a handoff with Pinales in a Tampa parking lot. Pinales was stopped with three suitcases containing an estimated 60 kilograms (132 pounds) of cocaine, which field-tested positive for the substance. Enriquez, Morales, and Carlos were taken into custody without incident.

The defendants—**Daniel Cruz Pinales**, **Arturo Carlos**, **Joaquin Enriquez**, and **Jesus Guadalupe Chan Morales**—face charges of Trafficking in Cocaine (400 grams to 150 kilograms) and Conspiracy. The investigation is ongoing and more charges and arrests are expected.

Under the current charges, the defendants face a mandatory minimum term of 15 years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Ryan Shaw in the Sixth and Thirteenth Judicial Circuits.

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