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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025

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**DRUG TRAFFICKING OPERATION DISMANTLED ALONG ROOSEVELT AVENUE**  
**CORRIDOR IN JACKSON HEIGHTS**

*Sixteen Defendants Indicted on Charges of Selling and Possessing Cocaine, Fentanyl and Other Drugs as Part of Open-Air Market Blocks from Roosevelt Avenue;*

*Three Defendants Charged with Operating as Major Trafficker, Face up to Life in Prison, if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York Special Agent in Charge Ricky J. Patel announced the indictment of 16 individuals charged with conspiracy, drug trafficking and other crimes following a long-term investigation into the sale of cocaine, fentanyl, crystal meth and other drugs on 93<sup>rd</sup> Street in Jackson Heights. The defendants allegedly operated an open-air drug market with sales taking place around-the-clock two blocks away from Roosevelt Avenue. The investigation into the illicit transactions included a series of undercover drug buys and the use of electronic surveillance.

District Attorney Katz said: "My office has prioritized addressing the pressing issues on and near Roosevelt Avenue to make sure that nearby families and residents are protected. As alleged, these defendants peddled deadly drugs on a residential street in Jackson Heights at all hours of the day. Three of the defendants are charged as major traffickers and, if convicted, face a maximum of life in prison. We are committed to dismantling drug rings in Queens County, block by block and street by street. I thank members of my Major Economic Crimes Bureau, the NYPD and Homeland Security Investigations for their work on this case. I also extend my deepest gratitude to the undercover officers who risked their safety to gather critical evidence in this case."

NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch said: "These individuals allegedly operated a brazen drug enterprise, running a 24-hour open-air market on a residential block in Jackson Heights and selling fentanyl, cocaine, meth, and other dangerous narcotics, including directly to undercover officers. They conducted their business in plain sight, using a neighborhood street as a base of operations. I want to thank our investigators, HSI, and the Queens District Attorney's Office for their partnership in dismantling this operation."

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York Special Agent in Charge Ricky J. Patel: "These defendants are accused of a crime scheme that pumped dangerous drugs into our streets, putting lives at risk and eroding the fabric of our community. By dismantling this operation, HSI New York, together with the Queens District Attorney's Office, the NYPD, and our task force partners, has dealt a major blow against those who profit from addiction and chaos. These arrests mark a turning point in reclaiming Jackson Heights for its law-abiding residents and families."

Thirteen defendants were arraigned yesterday on a 47-count indictment charging them all with conspiracy in the fourth degree and variously charging them with criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree and third degrees and other crimes. Three defendants -- Jonathan Mendoza, Brian Zamudio and Moises Andon -- were charged as operating as a major trafficker. **(See addendum.)**

One defendant will be arraigned at a later date and two are at large.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Leigh Cheng ordered the defendants to return to court on various dates in January. If convicted of the top count, Mendoza, Zamudio and Andon face up to life in prison.

The DA's office investigation began in February 2024 in response to complaints received by the NYPD about drug sales in Jackson Heights. The investigation, done in conjunction with Homeland Security Investigations, included undercover drug buys and court-authorized electronic surveillance.

DA Katz said that, according to the indictment and investigation, the defendants sold cocaine, fentanyl, crystal meth and other drugs including Percocet on 93<sup>rd</sup> Street near the corner of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Many of the sales took place in front of defendant Roberto Maldonado's home, where lawn chairs were set up outside. The defendants allegedly conducted street sales around-the-clock and openly handed drugs to buyers.

Alleged ringleader Mendoza is alleged to have continued to lead the operation after he was incarcerated on Riker's Island on another matter, through phone calls to his girlfriend, defendant Diana Idrovo.

Undercover officers made 26 buys of controlled substances costing approximately \$10,400. Those purchases included approximately 200 grams of cocaine.

Fourteen of the 16 defendants were arrested Monday, and court-authorized search warrants resulted in the seizure of:

- Over 300 grams of fentanyl
- Over 2 kilos of cocaine
- One 9 mm handgun and two high-capacity magazines loaded with ammo
- Over 16 grams of oxycodone
- 30 grams of crystal meth
- 160 grams of ecstasy
- A number of scales and money counters
- Over \$30,000 in cash

Additional charges were brought against seven of the defendants and an additional defendant, Mario Castillo, was also charged.

The investigation was conducted by members of NYPD's Queens North Narcotics, led by Detectives Tyler Ficken and Tatiana Moncada, under the supervision of Lieutenant David Rodriguez, Captain Ehtasham Khan and Chief Robert Gallitelli, along with members of HSI New York.

Assistant District Attorney Candice Smith of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Kieran Linehan, Section Chief of the Major Narcotics Unit, Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Catherine C. Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

## **ADDENDUM**

**Jonathan Mendoza, 31**, of Corona, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, operating as a major trafficker and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degrees. Mendoza is due back in court January 21. He was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first, second, third and seventh degrees, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree.

**Brian Zamudio, 30**, of Maspeth, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, operating as a major trafficker and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second and third degrees. Zamudio is due back in court January 21.

**Moises Andon, 23**, of Elmhurst, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, operating as a major trafficker, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and attempted criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree. Andon is due back in court January 21. He was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first and seventh degrees and criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree.

**Jessi Garcia, 33**, of Rego Park, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Garcia has not been apprehended.

**Jason Aspiroz, 22**, of Corona, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Aspiroz is due back in court January 27.

**Jose Prado, 21**, of Forest Hills, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Prado is due back in court January 21. He was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third, fourth, fifth and seventh degrees.

**Joan Salto, 29**, of Jackson Heights, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Salto is due back in court January 21.

**Wilson Matute, 29**, of Corona, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Matute is due back in court January 21. He was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the second and seventh degrees and criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree.

**Xavier Cabrera, 21** of College Point, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Cabrera is due back in court January 21.

**Diana Idrovo, 24**, of Corona, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third and fifth degrees and attempted criminal possession of a controlled substance in the second degree. Idrovo is due back in court January 21. She was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first, second, third and seventh degrees, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree.

**Ramon Salcedo, 32**, of Jackson Heights, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Salcedo has not been apprehended.

**Salomon Andon, 21**, of Corona, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Andon is due back in court January 21. He was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first and seventh degrees and criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree.

**Roberto Maldonado, 33**, of Jackson Heights, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. Maldonado is due back in court January 21.

**Joshua Pressley, 34**, of Flushing, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree and attempted criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree. Pressley is due back in court January 26.

**Alexis Sierra, 30**, of Bay Terrace, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree and attempted criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree. Sierra is due back in court January 27. He was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a weapon in the second and third degrees, criminal possession of a firearm and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree.

**Antonio Valerio, 63**, of Elmhurst, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the second degree and attempted criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree. Valerio will be arraigned at a later date.

**Mario Castillo, 25**, of Corona, was charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first and seventh degrees and criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree. He is due back in court December 19.

**Note to Editors:** Archived press releases are available at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).

