

Dominican national living in Massachusetts pleads guilty to role in drug trafficking conspiracy

A Dominican national residing in Lawrence pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in Boston to conspiracy and distribution charges involving large quantities of fentanyl.

Ysrael Nunez, 39, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl; one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl; and one count of distribution of and possession with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and aiding and abetting. U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin scheduled sentencing for March 18, 2022. Nunez was charged along with co-defendant Leisy Baez-Zapata in July 2019 and were subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury in August 2019.

In October 2018, agents began investigating a drug trafficking organization (DT0) that distributed fentanyl in the Lawrence area. Between October 2018 and July 2019, a cooperating witness made controlled purchases of fentanyl from the DT0 and on July 24, 2019, Nunez sold the cooperating witness approximately 23 grams of fentanyl. During that meeting, they discussed the DT0 supplying the cooperating witness with a kilogram of fentanyl. The following day, the cooperating witness made arrangements with Nunez to purchase a kilogram of fentanyl which Leisy Baez-Zapata subsequently delivered to the cooperating witness and an undercover agent.

On Sept. 29, 2021, Baez-Zapata was sentenced by Judge Sorokin to time served (approximately 26 months in prison) and three

years of supervised release after previously pleading guilty.

The charges of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and distribution of 400 grams or more of fentanyl provides for a sentence of at least 10 years and up to life in prison, at least five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$10 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins and Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Field Division, made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alatheia Porter of Rollins' Narcotics & Money Laundering Unit is prosecuting the case.