



## *U.S. Department of Justice*

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### PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

**December 14, 2010**

#### **MEXICAN NATIONAL SENTENCED TO 84-MONTHS IMPRISONMENT ON FEDERAL METHAMPHETAMINE CONVICTION**

Today, Senior United States District Judge John Edwards Conway sentenced **Leans Francisco Cruz-Pano**, a 23-year old Mexican national, to an 84-month term of imprisonment to be followed by three-years supervised release based on a narcotics trafficking conviction. Cruz-Pano has been in custody since his arrest on August 5, 2009 when he was charged with possession of more than 500 grams of methamphetamine with intent to distribute. He entered a plea of guilty to a one-count information on July 22, 2010 under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that the charge against Cruz-Pano stems from a traffic stop executed by the New Mexico State Police (NMSP) for failure to utilize a turn signal during a lane change in the early hours of August 5, 2009. The criminal complaint filed in the case reflects that, when the NMSP officer questioned Cruz-Pano, the driver of the vehicle who identified himself as Eduardo Magano, and co-defendant Alfredo Flores-Magana, they gave conflicting accounts about their travels. After giving Cruz-Pano a citation, the NMSP officer requested and received consent to

search the vehicle. After a narcotics canine indicated a positive alert for the presence of a controlled substance in the vehicle, NMSP officers located a hidden compartment inside the air-conditioning unit behind the front dash of the vehicle which contained two cylindrical shaped objects that contained substances that tested positive for methamphetamine and weighed approximately 676.5 grams.

According to the criminal complaint, subsequent investigation revealed that Cruz-Pano and co-defendant Flores-Magana were observed at a residence in Kansas City, MO in January 2009, where the agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) later found \$23,000 in cash. It further revealed that, on that same January 2009 day, Cruz-Pano was observed at another residence in Kansas City, MO, where DEA agents later recovered a kilogram of cocaine and two pounds of methamphetamine.

According to his plea agreement, Cruz-Pano admitted knowingly possessing the methamphetamine found in his vehicle on August 5, 2009, and that he intended to distribute that methamphetamine. Co-defendant Flores-Magana entered a guilty plea on July 22, 2010, and was sentenced to a 41-month term of imprisonment and three-years supervised release on November 11, 2010.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Holland S. Kastrin and Norman Cairns, and was investigated by the New Mexico State Police and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

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