

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Texas Businessman Pleads Guilty to Money Laundering Charges in Connection with Venezuela Bribery Scheme

A former procurement officer of Venezuela's state-owned and state-controlled energy company, Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA), pleaded guilty today for his role in an international money laundering scheme involving bribes paid by the owners of U.S.-based companies to Venezuelan government officials in exchange for securing additional business with PDVSA and payment priority on outstanding invoices.

Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Patrick of the Southern District of Texas and Special Agent in Charge Mark Dawson of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations' (HSI) Houston Field Office made the announcement.

Ivan Alexis Guedez (Guedez), 47, of Katy, Texas, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Christina A. Bryan of the Southern District of Texas in Houston to one count of conspiracy to launder money. Guedez is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 20, 2019 by U.S. District Judge Gray H. Miller of the Southern District of Texas.

According to admissions made in connection with Guedez's plea, Guedez agreed with other PDVSA officials and businessmen who were employed by a Miami-based PDVSA supplier that, in exchange for bribe payments, Guedez and the other PDVSA officials would direct PDVSA business toward the supplier. The co-conspirators who were employed by the PDVSA supplier also received kickbacks. Guedez and his co-conspirators concealed the corrupt payments by, among other things, communicating using fictitious email addresses, creating false invoices to justify the payments, and directing the bribe payments to a Swiss account in the name of a shell company before being disbursed to the co-conspirators.

As part of his plea agreement, Guedez has agreed to forfeit the proceeds of his criminal activity.

Guedez becomes the latest individual to plead guilty as part of a larger, ongoing investigation by the U.S. government into bribery at PDVSA. Including Guedez, the Justice Department has announced the guilty pleas of a total of 15 individuals in connection with the investigation.

HSI Houston is conducting the ongoing investigation with assistance from HSI Boston and Madrid, as well as from IRS Criminal Investigation. Trial Attorneys Jeremy R. Sanders, Sarah E. Edwards and Sonali Patel of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys John Pearson and Robert S. Johnson of the Southern District of Texas are prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristine Rollinson of the Southern District of Texas is handling the forfeiture aspects of the case.

The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and the Cayman Islands Mutual Legal Assistance Authority and Office of the Director of Public Prosecution also provided assistance.

The Fraud Section is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all FCPA matters. Additional information about the Justice Department's FCPA enforcement efforts can be found at www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa.

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Foreign Corruption

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